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James Powell

C Smith  
Powell

**Andover Theological Seminary**

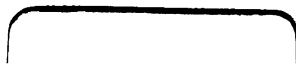


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James Powell









Very cordially Yours  
James Powell





# JAMES POWELL

## Reminiscences

EDITED BY

H. PORTER SMITH

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*"The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."*

---

BOSTON AND CHICAGO

*Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society*

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## On James Powell's Portrait

BY J. E. RANKIN, D.D.

O FACE, all radiant with the light of love,  
O eyes, so laughing in their tenderness,  
So quick to read the language of distress,  
O lips, so touched with flame as from above,  
O man, with godhead stamped upon thy brow,  
And manhood beating in thy pulses strong,  
To stir thee up to stamp thy heel on wrong,  
That earth should have no more thy pattern now !  
No more should see thee on the wings of mercy sent !  
Thou hadst thy mortal years so wisely spent,  
That heaven seemed too soon to crown thy brow;  
The veil of flesh was prematurely rent,  
And earthly glory with celestial blent.





TO  
**The Great Cause for which**  
**James Powell**  
**Lived and Died,**  
AND TO  
**His Fellow Laborers.**



## Preface

---

ON his birthday, Christmas, 1887, JAMES POWELL entered the life of service and reward in heaven. At a recent meeting of the American Missionary Association it was manifest that where his largest public work was done the silent lapse of years had brightened rather than dimmed his memory.

These reminiscences by friends and associates have been gathered in the belief that they will help perpetuate the inspiring influence of his noble life, and that his power for good

“ Shall like a river run, and broader flow.”

H. P. S.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

*June, 1893*

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## Introduction

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THE name and presence and life of James Powell have lost nothing of the interest which belonged to them in the five years which have passed since he was seen among us. He had a rare faculty of impressing himself upon men, interesting them, persuading them, imparting to them of his own spirit and purpose. A connected and elaborate memoir might well have been written, with the complete story of his life. In this his sermons, addresses, letters would have had their place, and the sympathetic mind could have interpreted the word and deed. Another method has been chosen; and many of those who knew him have presented the



life in its various portions, while one skillful hand has arranged and combined the whole. There are obvious advantages in this method. It gives us the judgment of different men, who saw the various stages of his life ; who knew him in his work and in his rest ; who had seen the student, the preacher, the secretary ; who knew the man in the promise and the fulfillment of his years, in the principles with which he began and in the work in which they were embodied. Certainly any one who knew him will find him living here ; while those who did not know him will perceive what manner of man he was, and how strong was the hold which he had upon the confidence and affection of those with whom he lived.

This is not the witness of those who by natural ties were united to him, and whose opinions might be controlled by their relationship. But these are men whom he met while he was doing his work ; who were drawn to him simply by what he was, and were kept with him by his personal merit ;

by the qualities of mind and heart which no one was able or willing to resist. This testimony is all genuine ; it is of the heart. In a manly way men speak of the man, and in their judgment is his fame.

Yet not there alone. He was happy in the ordering of his days. It is enough for any man—it would have been enough for him—to be a parish minister. The brief years of his service as a pastor were marked by the zeal and faithfulness and ability which caused him to be sought for the work of all the churches, in a parish as broad as the land. It was a great opportunity which called him,—a national opportunity. The republic which had been preserved was to be perfected. Intelligence, virtue, religion, were to create manhood, and make liberty a reality. For the sake of the country and her institutions, and her work for the world, the freedom which by war had been procured in peace was to be made freedom indeed. It was a novel enterprise, and it needed

the genius of a Christian statesmanship. To this he was summoned. In this cause he wrought with his full strength for eighteen years, and upon its altar he laid down the life which had been devoted to it. The record belongs in the history of the republic.

Important as this work was, no part of his life is of more interest than those early days in which he came to the consciousness of his manhood, and became the disciple and friend of Him whose apostle he was to be. Simple but eventful was that experience wherein the boy found himself and God. From those hours, from the influences which entered into them, came all which we laud, and for which we give thanks. The secret of the life, and the history of its power are there; and there we should linger till we have learned the meaning and method of that beginning.

No one can tell the story of that time so well as he whose affection has made him the editor of these memorials. Not

the least of the benefits which will be derived from these friendly records, is their illustration of that which a Christian merchant can do for his clerks, and of the way an earnest life can repeat itself and extend its influence. The authority which is vested in an employer is never more worthily exercised than when his works commend his confession, and his words persuade the youth committed to him to bring to his desires "the power of an endless life."

Fortunate was James Powell in coming into the employ of this man of business; and fortunate was the man who received the boy, and who saw in him the possibilities which became the truth of the years which still live, and which are so well described in these inspiring pages.

ALEXANDER MCKENZIE.

THE FIRST CHURCH IN CAMBRIDGE

1893.



I

**Dr. Powell's Youth**

**H. PORTER SMITH**



# I

## Dr. Powell's Youth

---

FROM the world's side the story of James Powell's youth is one of romantic incidents; from the Christian's side it is full of divine leadings. How vividly I recall a morning in the early spring of 1859, when a slender lad walked briskly into our store in Boston, and asked for employment as a journeyman! He had no testimonials; no new hands were needed just then, and the youthful appearance of the applicant was not in his favor. "*You* a coatmaker! Where did you learn your trade?" His ready answers to that and other questions, and something in him, awakened an interest. While medi-



tating upon the possibility of his being a good workman, the boy interrupts this cogitation: "I s'pose you don't want a hand;" turns, and quickly reaches the door. But he is called back and engaged on trial.

Several days pass, and his employers find they have a first-class mechanic. Such a *little* fellow! Making himself at home in his new quarters at once; bright, wide-awake, skillful, active, whistling, singing, fiddling (in the noon hour), full of stories, bubbling over with good-natured fun—who could help being interested in him?

He was born in Wales, Dec. 25, 1842. He had come to this country when twelve years of age, with a sister and her husband. He had lived with them in New York until now. That night, his first in Boston, he pawned his overcoat to obtain a lodging. He told one of his shopmates that he had left New York "because his sister was too pious for him." Then he had a sister

praying for him, perhaps a mother, — so I thought.

Saturday night came, and I said to him, "Where do you spend your evenings, Jimmie?"

"I agreed to go to the theater to-night," was the reply.

"Go with me to-night. I want you to see the pleasant parlors of the Young Men's Christian Association, and get acquainted with some of the young men there."

He was pleased with the invitation, and accepted. The secretary of the Boston Young Men's Christian Association was L. P. Rowland. He was told about the boy; and when they met, Mr. Rowland received him literally with open arms. He *may* have spent part of that evening at the theater, but we went to the rooms together again on Monday night, and to the nine o'clock prayer meeting. Tuesday he found his way alone to the same meeting. This time he rose for prayers.

His conversion quickly followed. He united with the Mariner's Church, under the care of Rev. Elijah Kellogg.

Here began the development of his remarkable power as a public speaker. His impassioned speech, ready wit, hearty singing, and ringing laugh, won many a sailor's heart. Sabbath morning found him on deck, or plunging into the hold of vessels in the harbor, with a package of good reading. This life and work among the sailors was, in kind, like his later work among the freedmen. I well remember his enthusiasm over the sailors, and how he would sing the songs that touched their hearts. A favorite one was : —

“What ship is that you 're sailing on?

Why, it 's the old ship of Zion, Hallelujah.”

Of this period of Christian work, at the age of sixteen, Mr. Kellogg writes :—

“I saw James Powell for the first time at an evening meeting in the Mariner's

Church, Boston, in the spring of 1859. He came, as he afterwards told me, in company with a friend to hear and join in the singing. When the meeting was partly through, a man-of-wars-man came up the broad aisle ; and, as every other place was occupied, he seated himself on the edge of the platform, in front of the communion table. He was a noble looking young man, and in his man-of-wars-man dress attracted all eyes. I knew him to be a Christian, and when a pause occurred invited him to speak. His exhortation I shall never forget, nor I think will any one who heard it. It produced such an impression on young Powell and his friend that they both rose for prayers, with several others.

“This was the first I knew of his religious experience. He and his friend soon after united with the Mariner’s Church, and I became strongly attached to him. I relied upon him in all my extra duties more than upon any one of my young

men. We used to hold meetings on board the receiving ship Ohio, at the Mariner's Hospital, Chelsea ; and we generally went together every Tuesday evening to the nine o'clock prayer meeting at the Young Men's Christian Association Rooms. We held meetings in a house on Fort Hill, before that was leveled. It was a rough quarter of the city, and we were often insulted and stoned. I think it was at these sort of meetings that Powell imbibed his love for missionary effort.

"The great reason of my attachment to him was his earnest desire to do good, and bring men to Christ. There was seldom a Sabbath evening meeting when there were not several who rose for prayers ; some in the galleries and different parts of the body of the house—most of them strangers to us and to each other, such was the roaming character of a large part of the audience. Powell was on the alert, and with the aid of others would find out the names of those who

rose, the places where they worked, and, if sailors, the vessels they belonged to, and wharves where the vessels lay. He would bring the names to me, that I might visit them during the week. He knew how to address people, and never gave offense. He could speak a word in season that would not be forgotten.

"I had a noble army of young men that year, as well as other years, earnest and faithful; but he excelled. With him it was a consuming passion, especially to find out and benefit seamen, and those who for any cause were deprived of advantages which others enjoyed. The sailors loved him like a brother. He could persuade them to go with him to the nine o'clock prayer meeting at the Young Men's Christian Association Rooms; and Sunday mornings he would go on board vessels, and get the sailors to go with him to church. If any one was impressed by the sermon or service, he would find that out, and bring such to me.

“He displayed so much of a missionary spirit that I thought he would go into a foreign field after obtaining an education.”

Thus weeks and months rolled by, his hours, apart from business, filled with Christian activities in the church and at the rooms of the Association. As he had been led, so he led others to these rooms. His employers found him a diligent, as well as a capable, workman. He was not neglectful of their interests, but faithful in all his duties. He won the lasting esteem of the men and women of the shop. One in particular almost adopted him, and often afterwards gave him substantial aid and the kindest care.

“I could do more good if I had a better education,” he said to me one day.

His book knowledge consisted only of the simple rudiments. Some old school-books were brought out, and assistance given. Soon after he heard Dr. Kirk

address the Association on "Self-Culture." It fired his heart still more.

"Can't I go to school somewhere?" he asked.

A farm-school in Amherst, N.H., was found, where he could be in a class by himself, and earn his board. Reluctantly his employers parted with the young Christian journeyman. His place could not be filled; but there was another Master who had a higher claim to his services. He must prepare to be a good workman for Him.

In these ten or twelve months he had saved a hundred dollars from his earnings. Visiting him after he had been at this school two months, I found his enthusiasm at the highest pitch over his primary studies.

"I know what an *adjective* is!" he shouted.

If his experience there could be written, it would form an interesting chapter. The school had peculiarities. The school-



building was an old homestead, four miles from the village, and near the birthplace of Horace Greeley. The principal, the late Prof. Edward B. Hartshorne, was the eldest son of the farmer who formerly owned it. Having received a college training, and taught elsewhere, he had come back to the farm to work out some of his own ideas in teaching. Cold-water baths was one of his notions.

Our friend was an eager pupil, and we may suppose out-ran his master's zeal in this direction. At daybreak of a spring morning he was wont to plunge into the quiet brook near the farmhouse, sometimes when thin ice covered the surface of the water. The diet was strictly vegetarian. Fish, flesh, and fowl were prohibited.

The master was kind, indeed, a man of unselfish Christian character, and this pupil well-beloved; but he had peculiar and somewhat original methods. For instance, as I recall it, a lesson in grammar would be the analysis of the sentence, "I

hoe potatoes," or, "I weed onions;" and having gone over it with the teacher in the class room, the pupil went out to hoe or weed, and ponder over the lesson.

Young Powell became much attached to the school and the principal during his three or four months' stay; but though it did very well for a beginning, it was not the place where he should long remain. I well remember when I spoke to him of another school. I had driven up from Nashua; had spent a pleasant afternoon, and, when the time came to return, invited him to ride a short distance with me. I wished to speak to him of other plans. Of these plans we talked as we rode. We went on and on in the twilight. When I reminded him that he was going too far, it was growing dark, and he must walk back, he said, "Oh, let me go farther! I can run back in no time." How surprised he was that I thought it best for him to leave this school! "I am learning so much here," he said. But he

finally came round to my view. After some miles he jumped out, and ran back, as he had said.

The principal of the high school at Nashua, N.H., the late Professor Stanley of Bates College, was seen, and Powell's story was told.

"Bring him down here," said the principal. "We'll do what we can for him."

He came to Nashua. Professor Stanley kept his word. A warm friendship sprang up between teacher and scholar, which lasted through life. Powell was allowed to enter the high school at the opening of the fall term, 1860. Here he remained two years, paying his expenses largely by being a waiter at one of the hotels. He found many kind and valuable friends—in truth, made them. Here, as always, his ardent zeal in Christian work was conspicuous. Here, also, and at this time, he found his best earthly friend, one who was to be at his side through all his large and useful life. At the end of two years

he had a good preparation, and entered Dartmouth College.

During his winter vacation at college he commenced a school in a rural district in New Hampshire. He only taught a few weeks. I found him back at Nashua, working at his trade. I was a little fearful; not so James Powell. His manly courage, onward look, and buoyant spirits, were as manifest as ever.

"I can earn twice as much here as in that miserable school; I am all right," he said.

The next two winters he taught a graded school in Tyngsboro, Mass., and was wanted in the same place the following year; but a larger salary was offered at Danvers, where he taught during his last vacation.

When he graduated, Chief Justice Chase presided at the alumni dinner. Powell was called for. The chief justice got the name Powers. Being corrected, he said, "A very natural mistake, after the power the young man displayed on the stage to-day."

The inspiration which Powell received from the lips of Dr. Kirk, near the beginning of his Christian life, has been mentioned. Near the close of Dr. Kirk's ministry, when he was feeble and partially blind, our friend preached for him. Dr. Kirk sat in the pulpit. At the close of the service, having retired to the pastor's room, where they were by themselves, a touching scene occurred, which, as both have now gone to their reward, it cannot be wrong to relate. The venerable pastor placed his hand upon the head of the eloquent young preacher, and affectionately pronounced a benediction. Mr. Powell was deeply affected, and felt it to be a call to a more complete consecration.

If I may be allowed a single estimate of my friend, it is that he ever kept his eye on his high calling. He *ran* the race; he could not stop to walk, or look back. His Lord gave him the five talents. He did not hide one of them.

“And so he that had received five talents

---

came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents : behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant : thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy lord."



## II

### **College and Seminary**

REV. GEORGE H. IDE, D.D.





## II

### College and Seminary

---

OUTSIDE of the circle of my own home, there was no one with whom I ever held such close and familiar relationship as with Dr. Powell. Our acquaintance began in the early days of college life, when our nation was in the throes of civil war. We were not members of the same class, but were brought together frequently through the literary society, to which we both belonged. During this period our relations were simply friendly. Unconsciously the advice of that witty old divine, Thomas Fuller, was being followed: "Let friendship creep gently to a height; if it rush to it, it may soon run itself out of breath."

Dr. Powell entered college in '62. He took high rank as a scholar, occupying a prominent place in the first third of his class. He particularly distinguished himself in all public debates. I think it was during junior year that he was one of the contestants in prize declamation. On that occasion he carried off the first prize. If there are two kinds of orators, one made, and the other born, Dr. Powell belonged to the latter. We should bear in mind, however, the remark made by Mr. Webster to a young clergyman, who, being questioned concerning his speeches made on the spur of the moment, exclaimed, "Young man, there is no such thing as extemporaneous acquisition!" Notwithstanding his natural gifts, Dr. Powell was a student in the art of oratory.

In college he was popular with all classes of students. His attractive social qualities won him friends in every direction. In the outset of his academic career he had formed the purpose of entering the min-

istry, and was dubbed, with others of like intention, a "theologue ;" but this circumstance interposed no barrier to his being regarded a "good fellow" by his classmates. While he was thus esteemed, he never failed to "show his colors" as one who was following in the steps of the Master.

After his graduation from college in '66, it was mutually agreed that we should enter the Theological Seminary at Andover, and room together. On my way thither from Vermont, I stopped over at Nashua, and spent several days with him at his home. I remember at that time he was very particular to attend the noon prayer-meeting of the Young Men's Christian Association.

From Nashua we went to Andover together, arriving there about noon. It was the autumn of '66. We were among the first of the students to find our way to this sacred spot of piety and learning. The old stone boarding house was still closed. It would be open to students on

the following morning. The matter of staying the wants of the inner man for the day became a practical question at once. At least two meals were necessary to tide us over to a breakfast in the Stone Mansion. Our funds were somewhat limited, and I suggested that we buy a quart of plums such as we saw at a store on our way to Andover Hill.

"All right," says Powell. "I'll wager that I can live on plums as long as you can." We bought the plums, and moved about on the strength of them till we obtained a "square meal" the next morning at the boarding house. Dr. Powell always claimed that our first day in Andover was given to "fasting," and that I wore, during those hours, the most somber expression that ever fell on a human countenance.

We found our room in the third story of the East Building. We needed a carpet for the floor. I proposed that we try to buy a second-hand carpet somewhere.

"No," said Powell; "let us buy a new carpet."

I said, "That is all very fine; but who is to make it?"

"Do not trouble yourself about that," he answered.

We bought the carpet, supplied ourselves with needles and thread, and were on the point of proceeding to business, when I observed, —

"Look here, chum, I can't sew. It seems to me that this farce of trying to make a carpet has gone far enough. Let us call in Mrs. Goff."

In the mean time Powell had planted himself on the floor, cross-legged, after the fashion of a well-bred tailor, with needle in hand; and with a merry twinkle in his eye, said, —

"Sewing is not your forte: I understand that; but I can sew. All I want you to do is to thread the needles, and we will have this carpet put together inside of forty minutes."


As soon as he began to sew, I was seized with astonishment. I was astonished at the nimbleness, dexterity, and swiftness with which he proceeded to put that carpet together. I was also astonished that I could not thread the needles as fast as he wanted them. The lightning speed with which he made that needle work fairly confounded me.

I said at last, "What does this mean? Where have you been? Singer's latest, compared with your movements, is like an ox cart following an express train."

"Oh," said he, laughing, "I am a tailor by trade. I worked at the business in Nashua."

The carpet was finished in the specified time.

Those student days at Andover are delightful to recall, for they were replete with what Bushnell has happily designated as the proper expression of activity, "Work and Play." This mixture found a perfect illustration in Dr. Powell. He never



failed in the recitation room ; was always faithful to the work to which he had committed himself ; but when the task was over, he was ready for play. He seemed to find boundless enjoyment in cutting capers with me.

On one occasion I received a valentine. It bore the postmark of Boston. I was somewhat chagrined at its character. It would hardly be considered complimentary to the receiver. I was not inclined to make it an open secret. But in some unaccountable way Powell had discovered that I had received a valentine, and he must see it ; and not only that, he must get it *framed*, and hung up in our room for general inspection. He fairly convulsed all our friends in the seminary as he pointed out its salient features. It was not long, however, before I learned that he went all the way to Boston to get it mailed for my benefit.

He once gave a butcher twenty-five cents to prepare a steak with a bone so nicely ad-



justed within it as to avoid every appearance of evil. Of course that piece of steak very conveniently found its way to my plate. I found it very difficult, with the tools at hand, to operate on that quarry. But this bit of pleasantry afforded endless amusement to Powell. I frequently felt that it was worth all it cost to be victimized for the sake of seeing him laugh.

Dr. Powell did not possess the conventional qualities which sometimes are associated with the "cloth." He was without that endless gravity which could almost fittingly grace a pedestal. That pious deacon who had not "snickered going on forty years," would have found his moral sensitiveness somewhat disturbed by the free, untrammelled way in which my friend spoke and acted.

He was natural — natural as devoid of all cant and affected airs. When we met him, we had not come upon some person trumped for the occasion; it was Powell, the very man we wanted to see. He could

not be anything but himself. He could be as serious as a country judge ; but he was serious because the matter was in him, and it was the hour for seriousness. He could be as playful as a child ; but it was because the play was in him, and it was time for play.

When he was pastor of the North Church, Newburyport, it was our custom to meet every Monday morning in Boston. On one occasion a brother-in-law of mine, a boy in his teens, accompanied me to Boston, where we were to meet Mr. Powell. We were soon tramping about the city on errands. Mr. Powell was effervescing with fun. At such seasons, and they were very frequent, he took great pleasure in making me the victim of his frolicsomeness. On this occasion I found that Mr. Powell had enlisted the boy in the scheme of hiding away from me every chance they could get. Passing through a crowd, I would look around and discover that they had disappeared, and then it devolved on me to hunt them up.

I never shall forget how his maneuvering interested that boy. He came up to me and whispered, the first opportunity he had, "He is the funniest minister that I ever saw in my life." That was his first acquaintance with Mr. Powell, but it was not the last. On that day an attachment was formed which lasted to the end.

A little boy four years old, in Oak Park, where Mr. Powell resided for a time, was asked by his father what he wanted to do when he got to be a man, and answered, "Be a minister and go a-hunting, like Mr. Powell."

He was a man for the boys. He touched a responsive chord in their nature. He could enjoy what they enjoyed with as keen a relish as they themselves.

He was the very soul of friendship; he had a genius for it. The friends that he made were only limited by the want of personal contact with him. In the making of them it may be said, "He came, he saw, he conquered." How wide he opened his

arms to receive us! There were no partition walls to be leveled before we approached him. It required no studied effort to get at him.


The way was always clear; the door was without a latchstring even. It was open. You never had to ask, Is Mr. Powell in a proper mood to see his friends to-day? Why, it was worth a journey of fifty miles just to meet that man, and receive a grasp of his hand.

I remember going to a depot in Chicago to meet him as he came in on the train. As soon as he singled me out from the crowd, he rushed toward me, exclaiming in his bantering way, "Well! well! well! this is the first sensible thing I ever knew you to do. Come on, old fellow." He grasped my arm and hurried me away, saying, "I am just glad to see you."

When it is said that he is the "best beloved of all," is it not because he first loved us? The generosity and friendliness of his soul captured our hearts.

Dr. Powell was a man of enthusiasm ; he worked at white heat. The logic of his whole life seemed to be, "What I do I must do quickly." He could not stop ; he must hurry on. He could pass easily from one thing to another. In all the years of my acquaintance with him I never knew him to rest as other people rest. If his body was not active, his mind was. The river of his life had no sluggish intervals. It was a torrent from first to last. His step was a bound ; his thought rushed in its movement. He could write a sermon in less time than any other man in the Seminary, so far as I know. Plans came to him like an inspiration, and were unfolded with a rapidity that seemed to me wonderful.

His scholarship was not technical. He always enjoyed the larger sweep of things. He would have been the last man to devote his life to the Greek preterite, and to question whether it would not have been better to have confined himself to the



ductive case. Such minutiae of erudition might be fascinating to others ; they were not to him. His large-heartedness, his sympathy, his wealthy and generous spirit could not be condensed into a bookworm or a recluse. They rather equipped him to become a watchman, that he might declare what he saw. He needed the whole republic to range up and down in. His ringing words might be heard on our Western frontier, but before their echoes had scarcely died away, their wakening notes might be taken up and reiterated on our New England coast. He was a voice crying in the land.

Like the great Master, he was sent to "heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, . . . to set at liberty them that are bruised." It was the down-trodden races for which he lived. Such a candle of the Lord would burn down to its socket before the day was half spent. Such hot haste and burning zeal must consume to ashes before the meridian is turned.

What a privilege to have walked with him in the fellowship of love, and to have enjoyed the richness and fullness of his friendship! What springs of tenderness in his nature ready to gush forth to refresh and quicken the tendrils of a drooping heart! How the sorrows of others found echo and response in his own soul! The grim messenger, death, once entered my own home, and made all a desert and a desolation. I never can forget the letter that I received from him at that time. What melting tenderness and sympathy were expressed in it! He was smitten and afflicted; he was wounded and bruised for my sake. It was as if he were the stricken one, and not myself. But I could not account, however, at the moment, for the blotted and blurred appearance of the writing. But it was all explained in a postscript: "Please excuse the writing. I could not keep the tears back; they fell so thick and fast as nearly to destroy the legibility of my letter."

How can we help loving such a man? He took up the sorrows of others and made them his own; aye, more, he took up the woes of a race and made them his own. When did the colored man have a better and more faithful friend than he? Burn down the colored man's schoolhouse through the malign influence of caste feeling, and you had kindled in his soul the fires of an indignation which quite eclipsed the original conflagration.

I have been permitted to observe the advancement and development of his faith. As the years carried him forward in his course, that faith assumed stronger as well as more graceful and beautiful outlines. He was not one who never had doubts or questionings. The difficulties of belief, as well as unbelief, were not unknown to him; but when he took up the mighty task to which he consecrated his life, and was left to grapple with illiteracy, superstition, and the needs of a benighted and downtrodden people, knotty questions in



theology no longer vexed him, for he recognized that there was but one all-sufficient solvent for the dark problems which thrust themselves into the foreground, and that was the redemptive power of the Gospel of Christ. Men may be puzzled and perplexed concerning the theory of sunshine, but there are no questionings on the subject that can override the practical effects of the sun. The sun shines in spite of our metaphysics! Dr. Powell advanced into the practical aspects of faith, and had the assurance that Christ was the light of the world, in spite of our theories of inspiration. He had an unbounded faith in applied Christianity. There was nothing it could not do in the way of recasting and uplifting the despised peoples of the land. We had but to go forward in the name and power of our great leader to effect the national redemption.

But his mission is ended here. Those eloquent lips must remain forever sealed

on earth. He simply ceases to be seen of us. We follow his path of translation with mingled tears and joy. The future life, whose place is beyond the skies, was a matter of great concern to him. I recall the hour when he returned to his room from a lecture on the immortality of the soul. He was almost overcome by the discussion which was being carried on in the classroom. He wanted the subject taken out of the realm of probability, and brought to the test of certainty and demonstration. "O chum," he exclaimed, "I wish I might die now. I can hardly wait for a demonstration!" He did not wait long. The bending heavens caught up his spirit, and he has gone into the holy city through the beautiful gate which opens over all graves. "Thus saints, that seem to die in earth's rude strife, only win double life; they have but left our weary ways to live in memory here, in heaven by love and praise."



### III

## **The Young Pastor**

REV. C. P. MILLS



### III

## The Young Pastor

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[When Dr. Powell graduated at Dartmouth, the president of the college, Dr. Smith, said to him: "I shall advise most of your class to teach a while before taking up their professional studies. I advise you to take them up at once." He went, we have seen, immediately to Andover. During his last term there, he received and accepted a call from the North Church and Society at Newburyport, Mass. Before entering upon his pastorate, he went to England to see his mother and brother, whom he had not seen since leaving them, a little boy of ten or twelve years, when with his sister he embarked for this country. The joy of the meeting and the delightful visit was often referred to by Mr. Powell. The mother's pride in her noble boy was fully equaled by that of the boy in his mother and older brother. The latter occupied a responsible position under the government. — ED.]

THE North Congregational Church and Society of Newburyport are the only people who were ever privileged to claim our Dr. Powell as pastor. The deeper

chords of love, which in happy instances are touched in the relation between pastor and people, in this case were awakened from the first, and were kept vibrant to the last. Though the formal union between them was dissolved after a period of three years and three months, the moral union was never broken. As he went forth to his enlarged ministry, the parish of his first and only love followed him with such sympathetic interest, and his home visits during the passing years were so eager and frequent, that he was never given up in their affection.

The unanimous call to the pastorate was extended to him in April, 1869, during his senior year in Andover Theological Seminary. He responded favorably in May; but taking some time after graduation for a visit to his mother in England, he was not ordained and installed until November 24. He entered into his sacred work with all the ardor of his radiant and buoyant nature. His quick mind delighted

in the application of the vital truths of the gospel to human needs ; his heart, instinct with responsive sensibilities, suffused his intellect, and his voice, resonant, cheerful, pathetic, expressed obediently his blended thought and feeling. He soon impressed himself upon the community as a man of life and power. The people heard him gladly ; they thronged him largely. The Spirit of grace put upon his ministry the seal of approval, as witnessed in the recovery and renewal of souls. In the pulpit he had the power of inflammation, because his own soul was inflamed with the fervor of the gospel, and with the enthusiasm of humanity ; in the social room he was the center of interest ; in the sick room and in the chamber of mourning he was the intelligent and tender bearer of comfort ; in the pastorate everywhere he was the object of enthusiastic attachment.

The young people especially saw the gleam of his sparkle, social and spiritual, and rejoiced in his ministrations. Febru-



ary 14, 1869, was probably the first Sunday of his acquaintance with the church. The Sunday-school records of that date show an entry that opens to us characteristics that were prophetic, and have become familiar :

“ Mr. James Powell, a student from Andover, who has preached in the North Church to-day, was called upon by the superintendent for a few remarks to the children. He responded so heartily and acceptably that it will be a long time before the recollection of this Sabbath-school concert will fade from the memories of those who were so fortunate as to be present. ‘Do something’ was the text to begin with ; and, first of all, learn to love Jesus. He told with the most gratifying results the story of the little boy in one of our Western cities who wished to raise some money for his Sunday-school, and who obtained an old powder-horn, and had the following couplet written upon it :—

‘ I was once the horn of an ox,  
But now I am a missionary box.’

He also gave out the following verse for the school to repeat when they should come together next Sabbath morning : —

‘ Curved is the line of beauty ;  
Straight is the line of duty ;  
Follow the last and thou shalt  
The other ever following thee.’

“ Mr. Powell has a happy faculty of interesting the young, and, at the same time, those that were young a great many years ago.”

These very interesting records, written by the secretary, Mr. George H. Stevens, under date of May 30, give another illuminating incident : —

“ Our pastor-elect then addressed the school. He had a word for all, from the youngest to the oldest, with a happy faculty which few possess of interesting these two extremes. He does not appear at a loss for anecdote to illustrate his arguments. This was particularly shown in his use of the old couplet : —

‘ If fairy in this world you be,  
Then fairy show yourself to me.’

“The younger scholars were all attentive, and the effect upon their young and tender minds will never be effaced.”

“On December 5th, the first Sunday of his pastorate, as he was walking down the aisle of the Sunday-school room with light and joyous step, he suddenly stopped and stood midway, as his ears were greeted by the hymn of welcome, written for the occasion : —

‘ Welcome, welcome, pastor dear,  
Welcome, ever welcome here ;  
Welcome to our homes and hearts,  
All that peace and love imparts ;  
Peace thy salutation be,  
Peace and welcome now to thee.  
    Welcome, welcome pastor dear,  
    Welcome, ever welcome here.

‘ Sent from God to us thou art,  
With his message to impart ;  
Sent to feed the tender lambs,  
Keep them from the spoiler’s hands ;  
Thus let all thy teachings prove  
Lasting blessings from above.  
    Welcome, welcome, etc.

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' May the favor he bestows,  
Which the humble only knows,  
Richly be enjoyed by thee,  
While on life's tempestuous sea ;  
Then when storm and tempests cease,  
Thou shalt go to rest in peace.  
Welcome, welcome, etc.

' Thus, till life with us shall end,  
Pastor, teacher, children, friend,  
May we all united strive  
In our Master's work to live ;  
Then his praises we will join  
Evermore around the throne.  
Welcome, welcome, pastor dear,  
Welcome, ever welcome here.'

" Following the hymn, which came as a surprise, one of the children presented to him a beautiful bouquet ; he graciously responded, and closed his remarks with these words : ' My only joy will be in seeing all coming to Christ, from the youngest to the oldest.'

" The attachment between himself and the young people was continuous and increasingly intimate. During the second

year of his pastorate he formed a mission circle among the members of the school.<sup>1</sup> In the course of years it has developed into an influential organization, conducted by the ladies of the church. Three weeks after his dismissal from the pastorate he was present in the Sunday-school, and when all were eager to hear his loved voice, he made an attempt to speak; but his feelings overcame him, and he only asked them to remember what he had before said to them."

Here is a disclosure of what constituted the power and charm of this beloved pastor, — it was the quickness and the genuineness of his warm sensibilities. Whoever approached him met with instant and sincere reception. His greeting was as cheery as the morning, and his handshake

<sup>1</sup> Shortly after his decease the name of this organization was changed to "The Powell Mission Circle," in honor of his memory, and will long remain as a fitting memorial of his labor, and as a continuing incarnation of his spirit.

more exhilarating than wine. His mind seemed never preoccupied, and his heart never overburdened ; so that the man and the minister gave the impression of being also the friend. This sympathetic and magnetic quality was the man all through, and from this root was developed the fine fruitage of his after career, as manifested in his eloquence on the platform, and in his work of Christian philanthropy.

Not long was the tenure of his pastorate ; impaired health led to his resignation and dismissal, February 26, 1873, much to his own grief and that of his people. The mutual words at parting showed that two loves had united in friendship imperishable. "Wishing you grace, mercy, and peace," he wrote, "I remain, as I ever shall be, affectionately yours in the bonds of Christian friendship and love."

The church reciprocated : "In accepting this resignation, we do so reluctantly, and with feelings of deepest regret. Although his more immediate connection

with us will now be dissolved, we would assure him of our continued affection, confidence and esteem. We believe his pastoral labors among us have been greatly beneficial to the spiritual interests of this church and community."

The church was, in a sense, consoled at his departure in the knowledge of his entrance upon the noble service which absorbed his best years. To that church had ministered for forty-two years Dr. Samuel Spring, the associate founder of theological seminaries and of missionary boards, home and foreign ; and it felt a just pride in surrendering the pastor of its admiration and love that he might devote his talents to the evangelization and education of an emancipated race. Pending the acceptance of his resignation, he said, in a communication to the church, "I have engaged to labor for a while with the American Missionary Association. It opens up before me an entirely new sphere of life, and such as, in the opinion

of many, will be highly conducive to my health."

For a while, only, it so proved ; health temporal was gradually, and at last suddenly, taken from him, that health eternal, in fullness of measure, might be given to him. In a moment, almost in the twinkling of an eye, "he was not ; for God took him."

"But oh, for the touch of a vanished hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still."

The church to which he ministered has, in larger part, been gathered before him, and what have been the rapturous greetings which its shining members have accorded him in the realms of ineffable light and purity is subject-matter for reverent imagination, yea, for exultant faith. The church which he has left on earth is grateful towards him for the past, sympathetic for the present, and aboundingly hopeful for the future. At the annual meeting of its members, after his death,



the following minute was unanimously passed :

*“Resolved*, that we, the members of the North Congregational Church and Society of Newburyport, receive the startling intelligence of the death of Rev. James Powell, D.D., our pastor from November 24, 1869, to February 26, 1873, with the profoundest sorrow and sympathy.

*“Resolved*, that we gratefully cherish his memory as a pastor who faithfully broke unto us the bread of life, cheerfully shared in our joys, and tenderly comforted us in our sorrows : as a preacher who, with clear brain and warm heart, cared for our souls and pointed us to Christ ; and as a friend, whose manifest affection for us we heartily reciprocated, and pledge of which we now renew in the faith of the heavenly reunion in the home of our common Father.

*“Resolved*, that we recall with gratitude not only his fruitful labor and love for this church and society, but we also render devout thanksgiving unto God, that, in

his ardent service after leaving us, divine Providence gave his voice remarkable power in pleading the rights of the poor and oppressed, and his life-wide influence in establishing the kingdom of grace and truth in our beloved land.

*"Resolved*, that a copy of these resolutions be entered upon the church records, and also sent to the bereaved wife, as an expression of our sympathy, in this hour of our unspeakable grief, with her and the fatherless children whom we fervently commend unto the loving remembrance and faithful keeping of our God."

To this my heart impels me to add a word personal. I loved the kingly spirit whom we commemorate as another self. Our hearts were knit together in love. Brothers were we. He was a true knight in the generous, chivalrous treatment of his friends, and the intimacy of his friendly feeling it was my prized privilege to know. As my predecessor in office, I have entered into his labors, and humility must be

touched with courage if it dare hope for his successes. "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." The welcoming heavens have flung open their gates of fire, and into the flaming glory he has joyously entered, convoyed by elect angels. Honored and grateful I am if, in any respect, his mantle has fallen upon me; but in view of the great work which he has left in my hands, I lift the pleading, passionate prayer: "Where is the Lord God of James Powell?"

## IV

### **Dr. Powell and the American Missionary Association**

REV. J. E. ROY, D.D.



## IV

### **Dr. Powell and the American Missionary Association**

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**A**S in his pastorate at Newburyport, so in his fourteen years of service for the American Missionary Association, Dr. Powell was a skilled workman. Into that workmanship he put a prodigious spirit and energy. In his early days he was spoken of as a "locomotive in a frock coat," and that was the man to the end. Going abroad with the Jubilee Singers, as their manager for a part of the time, he did well his share of that grand accomplishment whereby one hundred and fifty thousand dollars were put into that monument of theirs, the Jubilee Hall of Fisk University.

In the great work of his life, his pleading the cause of the "despised races," whether in the pulpit, on the platform, in the press, or at the desk, this skill was everywhere recognized. His clerk's instructions were, "When you write for me, put in as much of sweetness and light as you can." His was the happy faculty of going to the mark in his official service, as in his hunting expeditions, which were his acme of recreation. After his eleven years before the churches and ecclesiastical assemblies of the West, he was yet at the height of his popularity; nor did it wane upon his transfer to the East, where he was delighted in as much as among us. His genius for eloquence, his twinkling humor, his power of righteous indignation, were at their best when he was standing up against the wrongs of the oppressed peoples of our land. As one has said, when once a voice had confronted him in defense of those outrages, "he trod the platform like a Julius Cæsar." The con-

secration of his gifts to this one thing, as he turned his back upon most inviting pastoral calls, did much to put honor upon the secretarial fraternity.

As Mr. Powell went South, he swayed the colored people to his heart's content, and always for their uplifting. He never rose higher than when, preaching on a Sabbath afternoon in the Plymouth Church of Charleston, S.C., before the Georgia Association, he set forth the apostle Paul's Retrospect and Prospect,—the good fight fought and the crown reserved. As he closed his impassioned utterance to let the Supper of the Lord take its place, the mellow twilight was coming on ; and the atmosphere, in sympathy with the occasion, had a sweet and holy hush, when a single voice in the midst of the congregation sang a song like a softly whispered prayer. Then it swelled into an ardent supplication, until the chorus came rushing on like a mighty torrent, and the whole was but a refrain of the sermon :



“ Do you think I ’ll make a soldier?

Yes, I think you ’ll make a soldier.

O brethren, rise and shine, give God the glory.”

Mr. Powell had had his lecture on “ Slave Music ” illustrated by many choirs at the North ; but here, in the very song which had most ravished his own soul, he had the sweetness and the power of the thing itself — the cry of the past, the wail of centuries of sorrow turned to jubilations.

And so at the South he gained upon the white people. Falling in with an ex-Confederate officer, a man of high social position, he remonstrated against the ostracism of the freedmen’s teachers. The gentleman gave in, and now for several years has improved every opportunity to befriend and defend the same. And then Mr. Powell’s coming back from the South was like the bee coming back from the clover-field laden with honey. He was loaded with incidents and facts which were to be used in his addresses with such skill as but few are masters of.

Mr. Powell, as a skilled workman, appeared nowhere to better advantage than when organizing and managing the annual meetings of the Association. The drawing to himself of the right men upon the right themes, and the marshaling of all with reference to a climax of spiritual dynamics, was a process of his own genius.

On his way to the funeral of Gov. Wm. B. Washburn, the President of the Association, he remarked to Dr. Savage who was going with him to the same place, "It is a good thing, when a man's work is done, to go as the Governor did." And so, and so soon, to himself was granted this "boon."



V

**Dr. Powell as a Secretary**

REV. M. E. STRIEBY, D.D.



## V


### Dr. Powell as a Secretary

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IN 1873, his health being impaired by his incessant labors as pastor, Dr. Powell was persuaded by his friend, Rev. Mr. Pike, to aid in introducing the Jubilee Singers to the English public, with the further purpose of either remaining abroad to manage the affairs of the singers in Great Britain, or of returning and temporarily taking Mr. Pike's place in Connecticut and New York, as District Secretary of the Association. The latter alternative was finally decided upon, and Mr. Powell assumed these duties in the autumn of the year 1873. A year afterwards, on the resignation of

Rev. Dr. Patton from our Chicago office, Mr. Powell, who had shown remarkable gifts as a speaker, was at once selected as District Secretary of our Western department. Here he remained for nearly ten years, when some changes were required in our district offices, and he was called to New York as Assistant Corresponding Secretary, and entrusted with the supervision of the entire collecting field.

The work he had done so acceptably and efficiently at the West was followed by equally effective services in his wider field at the East. In the burden of debt upon the Association, from 1885 to 1887, the energies of Dr. Powell were called into full play; and when, at our annual meeting, in the latter year, we rejoiced in deliverance from debt, it was felt that the gratifying result was due in a large measure to his eloquence by voice and pen. At that meeting Dr. Powell was elected Corresponding Secretary of the Association.



Brother Powell was an orator born, not made. His eloquence was not of the Websterian sort, massive and logical, but rather of that magnetic kind which wins and sways an audience at will, sometimes to smiles and then to tears, but always with definite persuasion. He was a brilliant writer as well as speaker. His pen glowed with a special inspiration, and was prolific as well. The pages of the *American Missionary*, the columns of the weekly religious press, the numerous circulars issued from this office, and his abundant correspondence, all bear witness to this.

He was a wise man in counsel. The impassioned and imaginative speaker is not usually characterized by a cautious judgment or administrative gifts; but we have found in this office that when grave questions arose for consideration, Dr. Powell was remarkably conservative and judicious.

But the crowning glory of the man was his bright and genial nature, and his



warm and devoted Christian character. It was this that won all hearts, that made him welcome on every platform and in every pulpit, that bound his friends to him in warmest attachment, that opened the doors of all homes to him, and that leaves the memory of brightness behind him in the offices where he toiled and in his own dear home.


His life went out, not as the lightning's flash, that leaves the deeper darkness behind ; nor as the setting sun, that is followed by the night ; but his departure from life was only the entrance into eternal brightness, and leaves a radiance behind that will be a perpetual joy and consolation to his friends. He was born on Christmas Day, and the festivities of another Christmas Day were not wholly past when he died. His birth was a Christmas gift to earth, and, be it said with reverence, his death was a Christmas gift to heaven ; for through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the sanctify-

ing influence of the blessed Spirit, we believe he was made meet to be presented to the Father, in whose hands we leave him.

A few words as to our office relations with him. It has been my sad duty to go to the graves, or speak at our annual meetings, in reference to the death of all the officers associated with me when I came into this work, — Lewis Tappan, George Whipple, S. S. Jocelyn, G. D. Pike ; all of these I have followed to the grave. There is this one difference between Brother Powell's death and that of the others in our memory : all the others had a long, wasting sickness. With relation to them we remember the darkened room, the pale face, the parched lips, the night vigils ; but we have no such thought in regard to Brother Powell's death. The morning after the holiday of Christmas I came to the office, not to hear the statement that Brother Powell was very sick, but the astounding announcement, " Brother Powell

is dead !” This was indeed terrible ; but the memory of Brother Powell has not been darkened with the thought of sickness, but remains with us just as he was in health and vigor. We still think of the quick step with which he came into the office, the hearty cheer with which he greeted us, the pleasant face that shone not only at the door, but through the whole day. He was a busy worker, as has been said, but ever and always the same bright face, the same cheerful heart, the same warm love, the same readiness to help bear everybody’s load, went through the long day. If you have ever spent a day in the mountains, with its breezy temperature, and yet with the sun filling the whole blue heavens, and shining on all things, — water, mountain, valley, tree and grass, — if that day has left its memory of brightness and sweetness in your heart, such is the memory left on us in the office by Brother Powell.

I must speak of his faithfulness as a



worker. Brother Powell was indefatigable; he knew no rest. When he toiled until the string snapped, he would go down into a sickness that lasted usually just six days; then he would rise as quickly. This one instance will show how he sacrificed himself: On one Sabbath he preached two or three times; then on Monday he sank down in a six days' illness; but on the next Sabbath morning he had agreed to preach in Mr. Beecher's church in Brooklyn; and, taking himself out of his bed, he did preach in that church twice, and then sank down into another six days' illness. It was in this way that the man burned out his life in the service. I often urged him to rest; I urged his dear wife to persuade him to rest; but I always had from him the assurance, "It is more wearisome to spend the day in trying to rest than to work." He always worked at a white heat, or he was sick.

Brother Powell was a consecrated man.

His eloquence was appreciated. He had calls to go elsewhere, to greater fields with larger salary, to apparently greater popularity; but these he always and unhesitatingly declined. He stayed with us; and I believe that it was Brother Powell's sympathy with the Lord Jesus Christ in those poor degraded races that led him to say, "I will give my life to them, and let the honors and emoluments of the world go." Such was the man we loved and honored in our hearts.

# VI

## **The Christian Orator**

REV. JAMES BRAND, D.D.



## VI

### The Christian Orator

---

MY friend and classmate, Dr. James Powell, was an orator. He had the two prime essentials, — the God-given oratorical instinct, which only needed direction and development, and a great cause for which to speak. Though blessed with a quick and vivid imagination, he did not, perhaps, possess a very high degree of *creative* power. Neither was he an actor in the ordinary sense of the term; but he had a quick, intuitive insight into human nature. His eloquence was not the lofty, sustained, impressive Websterian type, which holds an audience spellbound from first to last. It was rather the style of Mr. Gough, who played with the emotions



of his hearers through all the ups and downs of laughter and tears, but always with a great purpose, a beneficent motive, in the background, till he was master of the situation, and then pressed his claim with resistless force. He has sometimes reminded me of an accomplished angler, who seems to toy for a time with his victim, but always lands his fish at last. Dr. Powell's eloquence was not the steady, majestic flow of the St. Lawrence ; it was rather that of a mountain stream, which ripples and leaps and laughs in the beginning of its journey, and anon complains and chafes in the curbed passion of its rising purpose, then later surprises and fascinates by its hidden nooks and whirling eddies, only to be succeeded by the swifter and more silently earnest rush as it nears the brink of the precipice over which it makes the mighty plunge to the plain below, where now, with augmented volume, it moves on, with a hundred gathered trophies, to the sea.

The natural characteristics which made Dr. Powell an orator may be summarized as follows :—

(1) The keen oratorical instinct, which perhaps can not be defined, but which acts as a pioneer to all the other faculties, discovering and opening the most available avenues to the heart and will. (2) A large, generous, sympathetic heart, which disarmed prejudice, made friends, and inspired confidence from the start. (3) An abundance of good nature, with an inexhaustible fund of humor and a contagious laugh, which broke down all walls of conventionalism between himself and his audience before they understood how or why. (4) A true and inspiring Christian patriotism. (5) A keen and delicate appreciation of justice, together with a deep and burning moral indignation in view of the wrongs of man to man. (6) Like every true orator, his thought was marked by a strongly poetic conception of truth, which gave shape, tenderness, vivid-

ness and force to his statements. (7) When roused on a great subject, as he usually was, there was a fire in his soul which burned his sentences into men's minds, and a courage of conviction which, like that of Wendell Phillips, seemed to say, "If there is anything that can not bear free thought, let it crack." (8) Added to these, and dominating them all, was his Christian faith. It is not too much to say that this was the supreme stimulus to all his qualifications as an orator. His relation to Christ brought him into sympathy not only with country, but with that larger conception of the universal brotherhood of humanity. It gave him the divine conception of manhood, whether it appeared in the ermine of royalty or the rags of the slave. It subdued his own personal ambition. It awakened his whole moral nature to a sense of the needs of the ignorant, the wrongs of the oppressed, the sufferings of the poor. It fired his soul with a sense of the con-


temptibleness of social caste, and the crime of human slavery. It created and fostered in his bosom the hope of bringing society into loyalty, not simply to human laws, but to the kingdom of God. It enabled him to lay siege to the judgment, the reason, the feelings of men, with arguments that not only touched society here, but reached over into the unseen and eternal. This was an oratorical equipment which pagan orators did not possess.

Dr. Powell, as an orator, had the immense advantage of a great and good cause to advocate. That cause was peculiarly adapted to his genius, and fitted to stimulate, from a Christian point of view, all the oratorical forces of his nature. There can be no doubt that all eloquence is largely dependent for its development upon a cause. Among pagan nations the loftiest theme was generally that of country, national liberty, the pride of victory or renown. Individual liberty, the abolition of serfdom, the recognition of man as

man, and the defense of his rights, seldom entered into the plea of the great orators. But the Christian idea has vastly multiplied and deepened the elements of influence which direct and impel to the cultivation of eloquence. Christ has added to the patriotism of the Greeks and Romans the greater cause of humanity and the kingdom of righteousness.

The cause for which Dr. Powell pleaded was that of three despised and wronged races of men, who could not plead for themselves. It is, perhaps, impossible to find a more inspiring motive, except in the mission of Christ himself, who plead for the redemption of the entire human race.

Into this cause Dr. Powell threw himself with all his native enthusiasm, combined with Christian love. His eloquence moved in a higher range of ideas and motives than is possible to merely secular orators, inasmuch as his cause involved all that is included in both patriotism and religion for these oppressed races. A cultured or




scientific age is doubtless harder to move by human speech than a vulgar or superstitious one. The emotions are more under control, the methods of the orator are better understood; and yet the great deeps of human sympathy, under every degree of culture, can be broken up. Dr. Powell was equal to the occasion. He used no sentimentalism, no artifice, no trick. He won his audience, whether in town or country, by appeal to moral principles which lie deepest in the human bosom, by his own genuineness, by his boundless good nature, by his manifest sincerity and unwavering confidence in the merits of his cause.

The work Dr. Powell did by his eloquence, in moulding public opinion, in arousing sympathy for the oppressed, and in securing vast sums of money for the noble Association for which he gave his life, can never be fully estimated. Like every genuine man, he built his own monument by his labors for humanity. That

monument, though invisible to mortal eyes, will stand forever in the affection of the long-suffering negro, the Indian, and the Chinese.

In concluding this very imperfect sketch of Powell as an orator, I shall be pardoned for quoting the words of his friend and colleague, Dr. Strieby. He says, "My own impressions of Dr. Powell's eloquence and effectiveness as a speaker and writer, and in raising money for the American Missionary Association are so exceedingly favorable that I scarcely dare to utter my feelings fully. He was a thinker as well as a speaker. And he was a poet as well, not as a writer of verses, but as giving vividness to his statements. His power, also, over the heart as well as the head, was remarkable. His arguments were not made at random, but were clearly arranged beforehand; were well substantiated by facts, and crammed home to the heart and conscience by his earnest manner, his genial face, and his manifestly



earnest conviction of the truth of what he uttered. I need not say that he was one of the most genial, lovable, and sincere men that it has ever been my privilege to know."

These words perfectly harmonize with all my own feelings and recollections of my vanished friend. What was said of Edward Irving can be truly said of James Powell: "His was one of the freest, brotherliest, bravest human souls mine has ever come in contact with." One can hardly contemplate such a career without a deeper sense of the sacredness of consecrated speech. Such speech is not only the instrument, but also the articulate voice of our otherwise silent God. Adieu, my friend, while this confused twilight of existence lasts! May we meet where twilight has become day!





## VII

### **Life at Oak Park**

**REV. EDWARD D. EATON, D.D.**

*President Beloit College.*



## VII

### Glimpses of Life in Oak Park

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WHEN Mr. Powell entered upon his duties as Western Secretary of the American Missionary Association, he selected as his home Oak Park, the beautiful suburban town west of Chicago. Here he at once allied himself heartily with the life of the community and especially with the life of the church. Necessarily absent much of the time, he yet kept closely in touch with all the vital interests of the place, and, it goes without saying, captured the hearts of all who knew him, almost of all who saw him.

During the first years of his life here his

pastor was the much-loved Rev. George Huntington, now of Carleton College, in whom he found a kindred spirit. Of these years together Professor Huntington says :—

“We were for several years very near neighbors and very intimate friends. Indeed, he was the most intimate ministerial friend that I ever had, and one whose heart was always overflowing with generous impulses. There were few days when he was at home that we did not see each other upon one pretext or another, if only for a grasp of the hand or a salutation from the door or the window as he passed on his way to the train. Many a time as I sat in my up-stairs study have I heard the brisk, sturdy step on the gravel walk below, and the cheery voice calling ‘Brother George!’ He was intensely sociable in his instincts, at least in his happy moods, and dearly liked to share his thought with his friends. The same sympathetic nature which made him

so magnetic as an orator made him a delightful companion. Many a pat story and many a happy hit which did effective service in his addresses was first heard in the freedom of social converse.

“As a parishioner Brother Powell was a model. Always in perfect sympathy with the pastor, and ready to co-operate in every good work, he was a constant help and inspiration, whether in the Sabbath congregation, in the prayer-meeting, in the business meeting, or in special emergencies. He was the life of any company in which he felt at home. He was very popular among the people. They listened to him with great pleasure; and some of the very best addresses that I ever heard from his lips were those given in our own church. I was indebted to him for many a thoughtful kindness. When I was sick he was ever ready to stand in the breach. When a pickpocket in Chicago took my old silver watch, it was Brother Powell who raised the funds

and purchased a splendid gold one, and who presented it himself, with a happy speech and an appropriate song, at the church sociable on the evening after the theft.

“He was a many-sided man. He knew what so few ministers know — how to play. He could throw off all care, and be for an hour or a day, a jolly, rollicking boy. He was fond of music, and could sing an excellent tenor. Powell, Humphrey, Roy, and myself composed a quartet called the Sons of Asaph, who for a time met once a week, greatly to our own entertainment. He also introduced the Plantation Songs to our people, and taught a choir to sing them till they were able to give a musical accompaniment to his lecture on Plantation Music, which would not have done discredit to some Jubilee Singers.”

On the first Communion Sunday of my pastorate in Oak Park, after I had given the right hand of fellowship to others

who were received into the church at that time, Mr. Powell came forward and extended the right hand to my wife and myself, with words of heartiest greeting. There may have come to him the thought, which probably at times asserted itself, that in adopting as his own the cause of a whole race, he had himself foregone the pastoral relation, so congenial to his nature ; but no shadow of this clouded the brightness of his welcome, — that preluded relations in which he ever showed himself the self-forgetful and steadfast friend.

Several occasions are present in my memory, typical of the Oak Park life. One was his preaching to our people a carefully thought sermon on Theism, in which solid reasoning was vivified by profound feeling. One was on his return from a journey to the South, when he took the home congregation into delightful fellowship with his experiences among eager scholars in freedmen's schools, and



quoted the irresistible wisdom of dusky preachers, and the scornful words of Southern dames. One was a game supper which he made for some of his male friends, when he was keeping bachelor's hall for a little time, at which he was radiant with the composite pleasure of having his friends about him, of sharing with them the booty of the chase, and of having gotten up the whole thing himself. Another was a Sunday evening service at which the pastor discussed the fallacies of a recent infidel lecture; at the close of the sermon Mr. Powell sprang to his feet, and, carried away by the intensity of his feeling, poured out an invective against the brilliant unbeliever who was putting darkness for light and light for darkness.

In inventiveness he was a "born Yankee." To obviate the inconvenience and danger of broken glass remaining on the ground where marksmen had been shooting at glass balls, he devised and patented the "Powell puff-ball," a wire frame cov-

ered with paper and filled with a fine powder, which emitted a light puff of smoke when hit, and which could be covered and used again. For the inconvenience of a fixed seat in a boat, or a seat on nothing in a swamp when duck-hunting, he substituted the convenience of a portable revolving stool. His royalty on the sale of these inventions kept him supplied with ammunition for his hunting expeditions. Out of his observations of ballot-box frauds in the South grew his self-registering box, which, however, was too good a cure for the election evil to be popular in the places where most needed. An improvement in the draught of stoves, which he had thought out, but not patented, he described on a railroad train to a company of friends and strangers, one of whom probably carried off the idea with him, for not long afterward it was advertised by a leading stove manufacturer as an important improvement. No doubt his quick eye and teeming mind

suggested to him many other useful novelties, which, in his preoccupation with more serious interests, he did not take time to develop.

During this period of his life Secretary Powell was closely associated, in the city office as well as on the suburban trains and in journeys to meetings of State Associations and special missionary gatherings, with Secretary S. J. Humphrey of the American Board. As the result of affectionate, critical study of his associate during these years, Dr. Humphrey speaks as follows:—

“There is yet a large *terra incognita* lying about what is called personal magnetism. But whatever it may be, our dear friend Powell possessed it in a remarkable degree. His genial, whole-souled nature seemed to pervade a room or a railway car as soon as he entered it, almost before the ringing, downright heartiness of his salutation had passed his lips. Even strangers looked up to see who it was

that had so suddenly charged the air with his cheery presence. On the morning train he would pass from car to car like a streak of sunshine, flinging right and left his hearty 'Good-mornings,' and his infectious laugh, and when he at last settled down, there would always be as many heads craned toward him as could come within earshot of his voice ; he the meanwhile — and this was the special beauty of it — utterly unconscious, apparently, of the interest with which the listeners were hanging on his lips. 'Powell's stories' have passed into a proverb. He was the most widely beloved man of any one in his position I ever knew. Wherever we went, almost the first word would be, 'Where is Powell?'

"The kindly outreaching of his nature revealed itself in all the relations of life. He was the very soul of honor. I can hardly conceive of his doing a mean thing, or of uttering an uncharitable word. His hospitality was of the most generous sort,


now and then, it must be said, exercised to the discomfiture of the good housewife, since he did not hesitate, even at inauspicious times, to bring home guests altogether unheralded.

“No picture of Powell would be complete if it did not sometimes array him in the garb and hang about him the accouterments of a hunter. He was a capital shot. He cared nothing for fishing ; but there was in his very nature an instinct for game. It was the chief means of his rest and recuperation. The vitality which he gave out so freely in his speeches seemed to come back to him in this way better than in any other. We used to say laughingly that when Powell was sick, if he could only stand half-leg deep in a marsh, and watch for ducks a day or two, he would be all right again. The spoils of his hunt — for he never returned empty-handed — were distributed with a lavish generosity ; and many a larder more than once was heavily re-enforced by the trophies

won from the air by his unerring shotgun.

“The personal magnetism of Mr. Powell manifested itself most conspicuously in his public addresses. He was a *facile princeps*. It can not be said, perhaps, that he was a profound thinker, although his speeches usually had logical strength and an order of progression. His success was not due to any forms or trappings of oratory, carefully studied in the closet, although he was not without preparation in this respect. He had the instincts of a genuine orator. He seemed to know intuitively how to take an audience. That subtle something, which lacks a name, but which in some real way connects an effective speaker with the hearers, began its interplay almost as soon as he opened his mouth. His tenor voice, with a slight touch of pathos in it, the ready flow of his well-chosen words, the quick kindling of his own sympathetic nature, ever strong and ever responsive to his thought, his sense of humor,

— not that kind which can recount droll stories with an imperturbable face, but that more natural, more really contagious sort, which heartily appreciates ‘the fun of the thing,’ and gives foretokenings of it in expression and tone even before it is fairly uttered ; which even does not refuse to join in the laugh that follows, — his intense sympathy with the man that is down and that is being trodden upon, coupled with a most spontaneously upspringing sense of right and justice, a sense so mighty in him that, as he poured out his invectives on wrong-doing and wrong-doers, he seemed sometimes almost to grow in stature as he trod the platform, and to take on the regal bearing of an imperial prince, — all this, and more, gave him power with his audiences such as few men in his generation possessed. I recall instances not a few in which assemblies almost hopelessly asphyxiated by some mismanagement, or by dull talks, have been brought up into animation and



intense interest by one of Powell's speeches.

"In a series of missionary rallies planned for by a State committee, a pastor whose inaptitude in managing such a meeting amounted almost to genius, had roused Powell to a pitch of thorough indignation. A Chinaman whom he had brought along was to be one of the speakers, and the announcement filled the church to overflow. When John had ended his brief talk, the pastor said, 'The Chinaman will not speak again. We are now to hear from Mr. Powell. His speech will be very long, and any who wish to leave will please go now.' Whereupon at least a third of the audience broke in confusion for the door. The atmosphere of the house, of course, immediately fell to zero; and we looked on with wonder to see what Powell would do. Smothering his irritation, he mounted the platform and began to tell a story. In itself it was not much to




hear, and then it took — for I timed it — just nine minutes by the watch. But he knew what he was about. It rested the people. The temperature of the room began to rise. By his inimitable way of putting the ludicrous side of things, the audience took a hearty laugh, and then the real speech began. The reaction was complete. In fact, the people came into such a condition of hilarity through his amusing stories that Powell himself could hardly bring them to hear the soberer side of his speech. For a time, whenever he opened his mouth, the audience would break into a roar of laughter. But he thoroughly possessed them ; and when he had spoken an hour and twenty minutes and tried to stop, there were cries from every part of the room, ‘Go on ! Go on !’ ”

Dr. Powell did not enjoy talking about himself, and many a chapter in his life of patient work and brilliant service has, no doubt, gone wholly unrecorded. How

much courage and tact it must have required to launch the Jubilee Singers upon their wonderful career in Europe! One evening in Oak Park he spoke of some of the experiences of those days: how he brought his dusky *protégés* to London, and tried to get a hearing for them among the incredulous Britons. He called on Dr. Henry Allon, hoping to interest so great a lover of music in the minstrelsy of the plantation. After hearing his cause, Dr. Allon expressed his deep regret that so ill-advised a step had been taken as the transporting of these negro students across the Atlantic. They might be of interest to their colored countrymen, or even to sympathizing Americans; "but here in London, a great center of the world's musical art, they must be judged by musical standards, and there is no probability of their success." Undismayed by so disheartening a reception, Mr. Powell obtained an audience with Lord Shaftesbury, and plead his cause so earnestly

that the great Earl, being more philanthropic, or less musically dogmatic than the clergyman, consented to become patron of the friendless minstrels, and preside at a gathering at which they should try to interest an English audience. Shaftesbury's patronage was a social guaranty sufficient to secure a large attendance. The colored boys and girls, grouped upon the platform, began their songs from the house of bondage. The great assembly was fascinated and thrilled. Enthusiasm grew until it overswept the bounds of ordinary applause; and during one of the climaxes of feeling, Mr. Powell caught sight of Dr. Allon, who had come with sympathizing pity for these uninstructed Africans, but, charmed out of his critical prepossessions, had risen from his seat, and was waving his handkerchief, while the tears streamed down his cheeks. The next day the papers were full of the wonderful singing of the evening before. The queen invited the singers to breakfast



at Windsor and to give her a private concert; and with that the castle of every loyal British subject was unbarred, and the Jubilee Singers found themselves the lions of the season.

Into this life, so rarely buoyant, sunny, inspiring, there came times of deep depression. The outgo of magnetic quickening, the thrill of emotion had left him spent and shadowed. In such periods of physical unnerving and spiritual conflict, the sustained and balanced spirit of his noble wife was his unspeakable blessing, and at these times he could not bear to have her out of his sight. She knew, as we did not, how the fate of the hapless millions for whom he wrought and plead was weighing more and more heavily upon his chivalrous soul. Even while exulting in the good he saw accomplished, the impossibility of the achievement of good for which he passionately longed pressed till it almost crushed him. She realized that the vial

was a fragile one that held the sparkling elixir of his life, and forboded its sudden shattering. But seeing how again and again utter weariness would master her husband, she grew to realize that for one so gifted, heroic, imaginative, inspirer of his countrymen, royally loving and beloved, God had yet a choicer gift in store; and when so suddenly the rest and peace of heaven came to him, her chastened thought was not unprepared to utter itself in the words of the English poet-wife:—

“What would we give to our beloved?  
The hero's heart to be unmoved;  
The poet's star-tuned harp to sweep;  
The patriot's voice to teach and rouse;  
The monarch's crown to light the brows?  
— He giveth His beloved sleep.”

After the transference to the New York office of the Association took him from Oak Park, I had a few much-prized opportunities of seeing Dr. Powell at times when the pressure of care was thrown off; once on the night boat up

the Hudson, spending a long, quiet evening on deck ; once on a morning visit to Mount McGregor, and once over night in his home in Brooklyn.

It was plain to see that he looked back with eager, almost wistful affection, to the years in Oak Park. He did not put off old friendships easily, although he took on new ones so joyously ; and the thought of the home in Burton Court, where friends came and went during the years of his growing strength and influence, where children were born and grew in their happy childhood about him, was cherished with all the intensity of his strong and sensitive heart. I like to think that, amid growing responsibilities, the recollection of his life in Oak Park was a solace and refreshment to him, as to us that life will ever be a bright and tender memory.



## VIII

### **Dr. Powell as a Parishioner**

REV. A. N. BRADFORD, D.D.

*Montclair, N. J.*





## VIII

### Dr. Powell as a Parishioner

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IT will be impossible for me to speak of James Powell simply as my parishioner, for he was my friend in Andover Theological Seminary long before he made his home in my parish in Montclair. In those old days at Andover his room was next to mine. He was one of the most genial and jolly of all the students, irrepressible from sunrise to sunset, the life and inspiration of the whole building. It would be hard to describe him as he was in his youth — never quiet, full of vitality and jollity, bubbling over with humorous stories, apparently at that time a harum-scarum

sort of fellow, who hardly gave promise of the great qualities of which he afterward proved himself possessor. But there was in him even then the fire and sympathy of the orator, and it was not hard to predict that, whatever else he might do, he would never be guilty of allowing his hearers to sleep under his ministry.

For several years after he graduated from Andover, in 1869, we seldom met; but when he was called to take charge of the work of the American Missionary Association in the East, with his headquarters at the New York office, he came to Montclair, and became not only my parishioner but my near neighbor, living in a house adjoining my own. Then the friendship of former days was renewed, and I found that the years had developed that hearty, enthusiastic, harebrained student into one of the wisest, most clear-headed, and really strong men in our American churches. Those who heard James Powell only on the platform, when

he was making some impassioned appeal in behalf of a downtrodden race, and who thought of him as a brilliant and fascinating orator, full of Welsh fire, had little conception of the really statesmanlike qualities which he possessed. However impressible he might ordinarily seem, as soon as the time for careful discriminations and wise judgments came he was another man; his haste left him, and he balanced with the utmost care all considerations that concerned critical questions.

In his relations with our church he proved false the common sentiment that ministers make the poorest parishioners. There was never a more thoughtful, helpful, or considerate person in my audience than James Powell. He always listened sympathetically, never with his hands over his eyes, as if enduring an infliction, and his presence was ever an inspiration. He carried his faith in the Golden Rule into his relations with his pastor. Whenever

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he was at home, he was found in the meetings for prayer and conference, and there his peculiar gifts made him most welcome. No one who did not know would have dreamed, as he modestly led in prayer, or spoke concerning the spiritual life, that he was a distinguished preacher. He had none of the quality of omniscience which makes some persons uncomfortable in all relations, and most of all to their pastors. Conscious of his own weakness, he was charitable toward those who differed from him ; and knowing that he was not perfect himself, he never expected to find perfection in others. When the fifteenth anniversary of my settlement as pastor in Montclair was celebrated, the people, in various ways, kindly remembered our household, making Dr. Powell their spokesman. None who were present will ever forget his address, so bright and genial, so full of wit, and yet so full of tender and beautiful sentiment.

Soon after that a great religious revival

blessed our community ; and one evening, in a neighboring church, a union service was held. It had been my privilege to hear Dr. Powell many times before when he had risen to heights of lofty eloquence, — the echoes of his famous address at the seventy-fifth anniversary of the American Board were still in our ears, — but I never heard him quite so eloquent as on that night. The audience was profoundly moved, and the influence of that address had much to do, I doubt not, in preparing the hearts of the people for the great and blessed work of grace which quickly followed.

No privilege of my ministerial life has been more highly prized than the opportunities for conference with him concerning Christian work in our own church and country. He was extremely sensitive to all possibilities of doing good. His experience as a pastor and his knowledge of churches made his advice peculiarly valuable ; and those years of his membership

in our church will ever be lovingly remembered as years in which, in the truest sense, its pastor was given a brother, considerate and helpful.

But Dr. Powell never knew how to take care of himself. He was always ready to be called upon in the interests of every good work. When he was not fit to leave his bed, he would start off on some long journey, and be gone weeks visiting schools in the South, or churches East and West, speaking during the day, and getting such rest as he could on sleeping-cars at night. No man could long endure such wearying and worrying work, and the wonder is that the end did not come sooner. For about five years it was our privilege to have him and his family in our church. It requires as much genius, perhaps, for a minister to be a good parishioner as for him to be a good preacher. Both as preacher and parishioner, and also as friend and fellow-worker for the Kingdom, James Powell will long be remembered in Montclair.

The knowledge of his death came to us without previous warning, and, although he had been absent from us for a year, caused deepest sorrow in many hearts.

No man was ever more consecrated to any cause than he to the service of the outcast races; and yet those who knew him only in his public career missed the finest and most beautiful part of his character. To see him sitting upon his piazza with his wife and children about him, laughing and joking with his children as he did with the students in the old days at Andover, romping like a boy with his dog on the lawn, interested in all that concerned young men, fond of athletic sports, a kind of universal genius, bringing into his conversation with his family and friends his wide experience and great knowledge, made very plain the fact that however great he might be as an orator, he was greater still as a man and a friend.

And now that I have written concerning his life with us as a parishioner, I am



deeply mindful of the utter impossibility of putting into words the influence which such a man always exerts. To say that he was attentive as a listener, wise as an adviser, faithful and fervent in the prayer-meeting, and that, when possible, he was ready to respond to an appeal for public service, is saying very little; for behind that lies a wealth of brotherhood and manly character that can not be expressed. Influence can never be caught and crystallized into figures and words; only the most commonplace things can be thus described. The perfume of a life, no more than the perfume of a flower, can be made known through the symbols of language.

The household of Dr. Powell was always a blessing in our community; and while I am not expected to write of any of its other members, it is in my heart to say, that great and helpful as James Powell was, both in the church and among the people of the town, he was no more helpful than was his devoted and beautiful

wife, to whom he owed so much, and to whom we feel a debt of profoundest gratitude. When the pressure of duty consequent upon peculiar conditions made it necessary that the pastor's training classes for the young should go into other hands than his, no one could be found so well fitted for this work as Mrs. Powell, and never was the work better done. There are those now grown to young manhood and womanhood who will not forget how faithfully and earnestly she taught them concerning the things of the Spirit.

When he had just reached the fullness of his powers, when he was in the midst of his greatest opportunities, and ought to have been doing his very best work, James Powell closed his earthly ministry. Having known him as a student, as a pastor, as a preacher, as an executive officer of one of our greatest societies, as a parishioner, and as a friend, I can say without any exaggeration, that he was one of the choicest and finest spirits that it has ever been my

privilege to know. That editorial which appeared in the *Advance*, describing him as the best-loved man in all our ministry, was a well-deserved tribute. His period of residence with us was not as long as in some other places ; but he was here long enough to get into the hearts of the people, and to leave behind him a memory and an influence which will not be forgotten for many a year.

# IX

## Powell the Friend

REV. C. J. RYDER

*Assistant Corresponding Secretary American Missionary  
Association.*



## IX

### Powell, the Friend

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*"A man that hath friends must show himself friendly."*

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JAMES POWELL held to the Confucian doctrine of friendship backwards. "Have no friend not equal to yourself" was the utterance of the Chinese teacher in the Analects. Have no friend that you can not make useful to yourself was the spirit of that instruction. James Powell reversed the order, and taught by his life this precept: "Have no friend to whom you can not be useful."

In analyzing the character of such a man it is sometimes difficult to put aside the accidental and discover the permanent and essential. This difficulty does

not arise in the analysis of his character. That he was an orator, no one who ever heard him speak on any subject would for a moment deny. That he was a preacher of remarkable power, aflame with the eternal truths of the gospel, could not be questioned. That he was a man of exceptional ability, displaying itself especially in the collecting department of a great national benevolent society, is also self-evident.

I knew him, admired him, honored him in each of these phases of his character. None of these, however, was its essential and abiding and radical element. James Powell was, above everything else,—a FRIEND! He was a fair-weather friend, making bright days brighter and fairer, vitalizing the very atmosphere of the sunshine in which he dwelt with radiant and joyous life. He was a stormy-weather friend as truly. Those in sorrow and bereavement were drawn towards him with the unerring accuracy of spiritual

instinct—the magnetic power of his sympathetic soul.

Only the other day a mutual friend of ours, the widow of an associate, poured out in my ear her burden of gratitude and love in memory of the help and comfort he had been to her, when she stood alone under the shadow of her great and recent bereavement.

His was not the superficial friendship that strikes hands with you at meeting, and forgets you at parting. Few men have had so wide an acquaintance and met with so many different people each year as he. But an audience was never a multitude to him. He was not a preacher to the “masses.” Whether preaching to the sailors in the Mariner’s Chapel in Boston, to the negroes in the South, or to the crowded audiences of leading representatives of the churches at the state associations, he was always looking into the faces of his friends; individuals were before him. He was seeking to convince,



to move, to help those present, and was impressed subjectively all the time with their different difficulties and conditions. Other secretaries were held in high esteem; James Powell was sincerely loved by pastors and by people, from Massachusetts to California. His power to individualize created individual friendships on the other side of the water, and thousands and thousands of men and women in our land felt that they had a personal friend in him.

I remember one of his last visits to the State Association in Ohio. He came into the meeting in a rush — he was always in a rush; he had to be, in order to keep step with the work the churches demanded of him. In a brief recess between two periods of the convention Powell went from pew to pew, with his cordial words to "John and James, and Charlie and Fred." There was no cheap assumption of familiarity in these greetings, but they were the large-hearted and thoroughly

sincere salutations of a loving and loved friend.

Another peculiarity of James Powell as a friend lay in the scope of his friendships. I remember the address of a distinguished senator of the United States, delivered on the platform of the American Missionary Association at one of its annual meetings. After apologizing for not having had opportunity for more complete preparation, the senator turned to Powell, who sat behind him on the platform, and said in substance, "I was crowded with political work just now, and nobody in America but James Powell could have prevailed upon me to come here, or to any other religious convention, and make a speech. But nobody that lives can refuse the persuasion of this man."


But hundreds of rollicking, reckless seamen in Boston and of the depressed colored people in the South felt the magic influence of the same persuasion, and

yielded to it, to their own surprise, just as the distinguished senator did.

He never lifted himself that he might reach the lofty, and never let himself down that he might reach the lowly. He was a true, honest friend to all; and sincerity shone in his bright, earnest face, and was felt in the strong pressure of his hand.

Another quality of his friendship that I can not omit was as characteristic as it was praiseworthy. He was always the friend of the absent.

When in the free conference of ministers concerning ministers, in the necessary councils for the adjustment of the great field operations of the American Missionary Association, criticisms were sometimes passed and judgments rendered concerning those who were absent, Dr. Powell would always say, "Now, he is not here; perhaps there is some other explanation of this; let's wait and hear from him again before we judge the



matter." He was the friend and advocate of the absent, and it was a Christ-like quality in his character. The absent was never the subject of his ridicule, or the butt of his joke. His was an honest and earnest friendship. This earnestness was especially manifested in his friendship for the poor, despised, and needy.

He was often playful in public addresses, but he never played with the great moral and social questions that the American Missionary Association was seeking to solve. His eloquence was born of deep conviction and an earnest friendship for the neglected and outraged.

It was not accidentally that he became a secretary of the American Missionary Association. Other societies invited him to honorable positions. But this association, reaching the great fundamental principles of social and religious questions, and laying its hand of mercy and help upon those that were most needy and most neglected, always appealed with especial

power to his generous and loving heart and to his Christian convictions. He entered the service of the American Missionary Association by a personal selection, because he believed that so he carried out a divine election.

The deep pathos and awful significance of this great missionary work among these needy millions impressed him more than the ludicrousness of individual cases. The latter bubbled up in his speeches; but it was only the tonic that made the water sparkle. The deep, strong stream of his heartfelt sympathy for these neglected poor flowed out in every utterance, and was the stream of purest friendship; and the weary and worn felt the coolness and refreshment of its abundant waters. The negroes loved James Powell, and many touching tributes came from their burdened hearts when he passed away. He was their brave, loyal, consistent friend, and they knew it.

Nor did he fail to appreciate the diffi-

culties and embarrassments that rested on the *white* people of the South. I remember right well visiting with him a town in the South, in which our schoolhouse had been burned, the teachers abusively treated and driven from the place. Dr. Powell and I were appointed to do what we could to save the household property that remained, and secure the insurance due on the property thus destroyed. We were met in the neighboring town by the clergyman of the place in which the fire had been, and warned that it would not be entirely comfortable, even if it were safe, for us to visit that town. We went, however, and met a number of the leading gentlemen. One of them, whom I well remember, was an ex-major in the rebel army, and was intense in his prejudice and bitter in his denunciations of the American Missionary Association for establishing a negro school in the midst of that town. Instead of finding in Dr. Powell a fiery advocate of opposite preju-

dices, he discovered a quiet, genial man ; and before we left that town, I believe the very gentleman who had been so bitter and hostile would have gathered a public meeting to hear James Powell talk on great national issues. He had completely captured them. It was not the persuasiveness of his eloquence, or the shrewdness of his management that had won them. They were most impressed, as was the northern senator, and the sailors, and the negroes, with the fact that he was a sincere, open-hearted man, desirous of doing the right towards all, ready to listen to opposite views, and appreciating difficulties, even though they grew out of sin on the part of those who suffered, or of their ancestors.

But if we go farther in the analysis of his character, we discover that the basis of this friendship for man was his sincere friendship for God. He believed his Lord when he said, "I call you not servants, but friends." Christ was his friend,

and he was Christ's friend. A humble friend he would always account himself; but his service was that of happy loyalty to his great Friend.

I remember so well my last intimate conversation with him. I had been in the South for a long time, busy in field service of the American Missionary Association. We lunched together, and had a delightful chat. The last thing he said to me as we parted at the office door — he going to his room and I to mine — was, "I want a long talk with you, old fellow, before you go back."


Christmas was on Sunday that year, in 1887. His birthday and mine both came on Christmas Day. It was Saturday, and we were to keep Monday as a holiday. Late in the afternoon he bade us good-by and a "Merry Christmas," in his inimitable, cheery way, and went down the long stairs that led out of the old Reade Street office. As he went he whistled in his rich, full tones that few could equal,



the strains of "Jesus, Lover of My Soul, Let me to thy Bosom fly," and passed out into the street. The sweet notes of that precious hymn coming back to us in the office, were the last that we ever heard from our honored secretary, our esteemed brother, our dear, precious friend, James Powell.

What sweeter or more precious memory, characteristic of him in his life, could we have than the whistled notes of that dear old hymn?

As I entered the office on Tuesday morning, the startled words greeted me, "Powell is dead!" It seemed impossible, and does to this day. And he is not dead. He is alive in this world to-day. The influences that his life set in operation are bringing blessing and hope and comfort to thousands to-day. The enthusiasm he stirred in behalf of the poor and wretched and despised is aglow with the spirit he breathed into it. The whole Church of God is richer and better and



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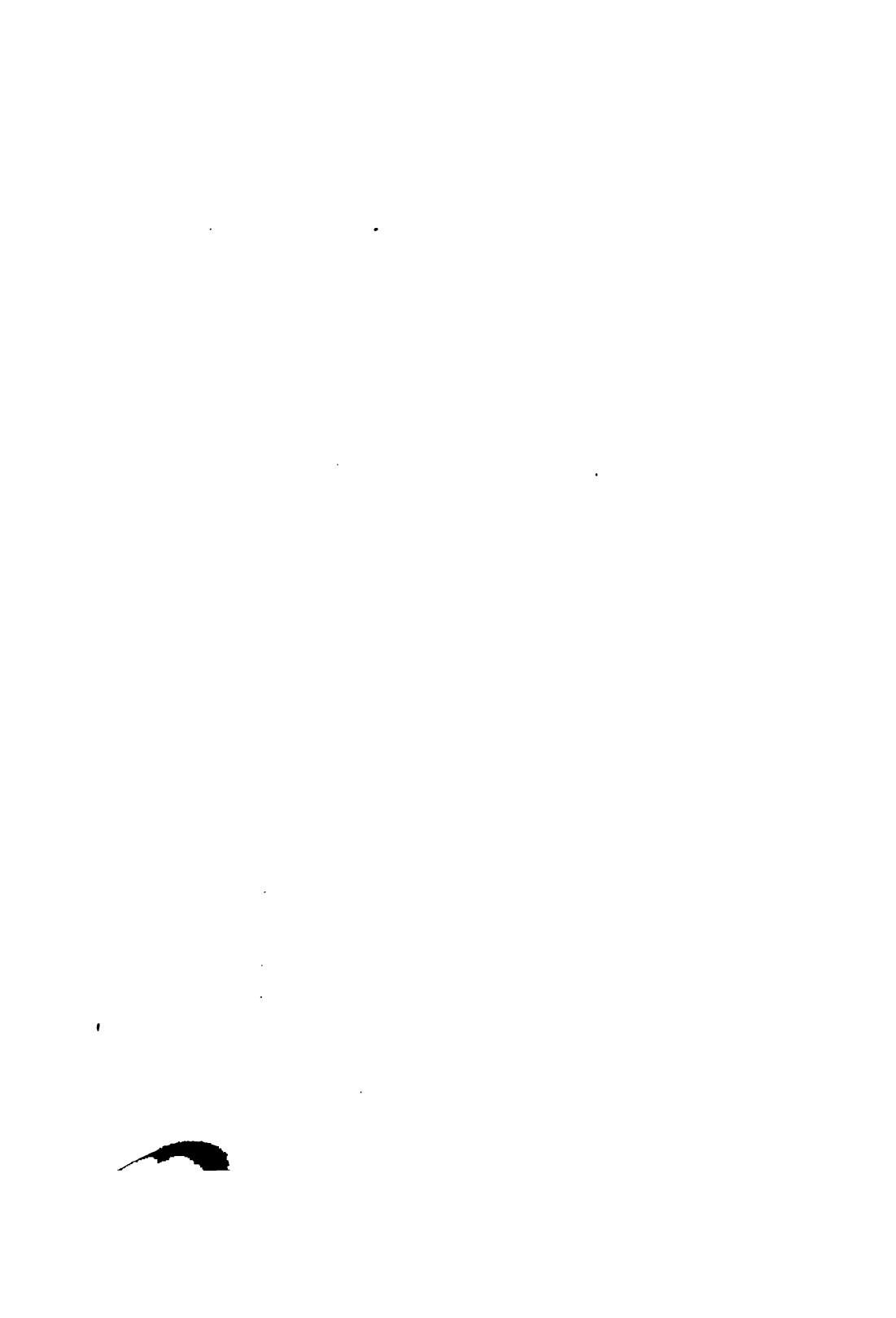
more Christ-like because of the life of  
James Powell.

"A love of freedom rarely felt,  
Of freedom in her regal seat,

. . . . .

And manhood fused with female grace,  
In such a sort, a child would twine  
A trustful hand, unasked, in thine,  
And find his comfort in thy face.

All these have been, and thee mine eyes  
Have looked on ; if they looked in vain,  
Our shame is greater who remain,  
Nor let thy wisdom make us wise."



X

**Our Best Beloved**

**REV. SIMEON GILBERT, D.D.**

*Editor of "The Advance."*



## X

### Our Best Beloved

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(I. *Editorial in THE ADVANCE, Dec. 29, 1887.*)

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“MY brother, O my brother !” is the cry that will burst from so many hearts at tidings of his translation. Just as we go to press the telegraph flashes to us the announcement of his death, early this morning, Tuesday. This news will cause a pang of grief in countless Christian homes all over the land, East, West, North, and South. One of the most widely known men in our denomination, he was the best beloved of all. He was never named but with emotions of admiration and personal affection. He had rare genius for eloquence ; he possessed a still

rarer combination of gifts for personal character. The "despised races" of our country never had a braver or a more ardent champion than he. Innumerable audiences all over the country have been captivated and swayed, thrilled and moved to action by his Christly pleas on their behalf. And those who have ever felt the sweet spell of his presence and his speech will never forget either. All in all, he was one of the choicest men our generation has produced. It will be hard to spare him. Though so suddenly caught up into the heavens, the Master will surely have glorious and blessed ministries still for him to fulfill. His life burned fast. The work of many years was crowded into but few. He has gone; but his personal influence as a continuous presence remains.

Of our personal feelings here in this office of the *Advance*, we may not now speak, only to say that for many years he has been a friend unspeakably dear to us. A happier home than his was there could



not be. God pity and comfort and care for the wife and children !

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(II. *Memorial Address at Anniversary American Missionary Association, Providence, 1888.*)

It would be impossible for the officers and friends of this Society to convene on this occasion and not feel profoundly the absence of one whose presence for so many years has done so much to fill these occasions with the spirit of welcome, of lofty animation, joyance, cheer, and renewed courage.

Last Christmas the "sweet chariot" of God "swung low," and our brother Powell was suddenly taken up from these great services here to other and larger tasks and joys in the heavens. A life so radiant and beneficent on earth, what must it be now that it has been translated and transfigured into the celestial ?

Among the richest inheritances of any people is that of the living names and ever-living influence of its noblest men and



women. Even though they have joined "the choir invisible," they still remain, a possession and a power for all time. For there are no influences more real, if any that are stronger, than the silent-working influence of personal ideals ; and whoever it is that helps to ennoble our ideal conceptions of character, and to make these clearer and more vivid, does us a vital service for which we may fitly be thankful, both to God and to them. This American Missionary Association is already rich in its "inheritance in the saints."

It is no exaggeration to say, although it is very much to say, that James Powell had come to be the most peculiarly and widely beloved man in our denomination. That this was so was not owing to any one quality, but must have been due to a singularly happy combination and balance of qualities. Every one thought of him as a man having a genius for popular eloquence. But he had also as truly unique gifts and graces for personal friendship.

Without a particle of cant, he possessed profound religious faith and devotion. He walked with God and had no gifts which were not consciously devoted to His service. At the same time he was intensely human. He never affected to be ethereal. He was a son of man, a child of nature. And he touched life at many points. His sympathy was immensely more than mere pity. He was instinctively as well as religiously generous, — open-hearted, open-minded, genuine to the core, quick, sensitive, responsive, impulsive, enthusiastic ; whatever he did, he did with a will and noble zest. Happy in a certain “divine sense of victory and success,” he also delighted keenly in the successes of others ; and there was that about him which made every one wish him to succeed, expect him to succeed, and apt to tell him so when he had done well. And yet he was, to a singular degree, free from any promptings of personal vanity. He had pride, but was not proud ; least of all was he conceited.

He never did poorly ; he almost always did brilliantly : there was not an indolent fiber in his being. He did well because he exerted himself to do his best. He was happy in the power God gave him, and accepted joyously the opportunities which others eagerly offered him for doing the things that were in line with the main purpose of his life.

He had an exquisitely sure and alert sense of honor. He could not do a mean thing. He won friends, and never lost any, because all felt that he was not only so genuine and unselfish, so bright and full of happy humor, so deep and exuberant in affection, but that he was so perfectly to be trusted. No one knew better his own rights, or was less wanting in courage that might be needed to maintain them. He was capable of high degrees of indignation, and his life work, championing the rights of the wronged and oppressed classes and races, furnished him with but too many occasions for holy anger. His

soul often burned with intensest indignation. When one night the people in Quitman, Ga., burned over their heads the seminary for colored girls, or when the Georgia Legislature was enacting the infamy of the Glenn Bill, his heart was hot as any Babylonian furnace, aflame with indignation, as though touched with the divine wrath, the anger of love. And yet not for a moment could one detect in him any spark of bitterness or malice.

But chilled now is that heart of flame; stilled now are the mighty pulsations of that better than chivalric spirit, which up and down the land, all over the East and the West, during those fourteen years, did so much to educate the churches, and to remind the country of the "kindness and love of God our Saviour, which hath appeared toward man," and which ought with all possible celerity to be manifested by men, — by men of all races and of all classes, toward one another, and to promote which this American Missionary Association finds supremely its reason to be.

The Society has had, has, and will have, other men in its service of splendid personal characteristics and having peculiar fitness for the signally providential parts assigned them in this great work, which ought to fire the heart of every Christian in the land. One we have, thank God, still among us, similarly loved and revered : one who has long stood at the front in this mighty and benignant enterprise — may the day be slow in coming when his great heart shall be missed from these yearly councils ! And still we may be sure that the resources neither of our humanity nor of the grace of God are in any danger of being exhausted.

James Powell's Welsh blood was in his favor. His American boyhood and training helped fit him for what was to come. That whispered word of a Christian lady to a young man whose conversion, in turn, led to the conversion of young Powell, proved to be a word of destiny. And his experience abroad with the Jubi-

lee Singers, in whose tones was voiced the pathos of three silent centuries, had, also, not a little to do in fitting him for the work God had in store for him.

Although but thirty years of age when he came to Chicago as District Secretary of the American Missionary Association, he promptly made it manifest that he was the man for the place. During the ten years of his splendid service here his presence and his speech became familiar in all the States of the Interior and West, and no State Association felt that its annual meetings were complete without Powell. He never went anywhere without being urged to come again; he never spoke but the audience wished to hear him more; and this, not merely because of their personal delight in him, but because of the deep, fresh interest awakened in the glorious cause he represented, and the various races for whose upbuilding he pleaded. Along with such other men as Secretaries Strieby, Alden and Clark, Humphrey and

Roy, Storrs and Cobb, Clark and Barrows, our brother Powell, whose like we shall not see again, had noble part in bringing close to the heart and home of all our churches the supreme message of the Master, the supreme want of the world, and in making the cause of Christian missions, at home and abroad, appear to be infinitely worthy and sure to win.

It is, therefore, easy to see how fortunate this Society was in having such a man for its personal representative; and how fortunate the churches also were in having the most characteristic spirit and motive and aim of the cause he stood for so fittingly impersonated. That fond mother of the famous English missionary, who is reported to have said that "as for her son, the grace of God could find but little to do in *him*," did not speak for James Powell. God had given him splendid gifts to begin with, but it was the grace of God in him that first saved him from making shipwreck of those gifts,

and then taught him how to use them so exhaustively in his service.

This Society represents, above all things, an educational enterprise. It has many schools, chartered and unchartered, throughout the South and West. We can never admire too much this far-reaching educational undertaking. But the Society is itself, in certain most fundamental respects, the very "head-master" in the school of the churches, in the school of the nation. And how beautifully, how superbly, how effectively, did this brother of ours shine and burn among the churches of our land, as one commissioned of heaven to help teach us the reality of meaning there is in this word of our Lord : how he said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

His memory we shall all, and always, affectionately cherish. For the service which he rendered to the cause which we also love, we will be devoutly thankful.

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If we have gotten any good from the life which he lived before us, we can show it by the growing warmth and completeness of our own enlistment in the same cause. Cries Mrs. Browning at Cowper's grave, —

“O Poets, from a maniac's tongue was poured the deathless singing;  
O Christians, at your cross of hope a hopeless hand was clinging;  
O men, this man in brotherhood your weary paths beguiling  
Groaned inly while he taught you peace, and died while ye were smiling.”

But not in that way was Powell the teacher of hope and of peace and of joy to us. He showed the way of the Cross and all the morning light of hope, because he himself had found it. And how lustrous and mighty and winning did his own way of life serve to make all this way appear to be!

“O face, all radiant with light of love;  
O eyes, so laughing in their tenderness,  
So quick to read the language of distress;  
O lips, so touched with flame as from above.”

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We have seen that sweet vision, and all the way before us shall be the clearer, and we the stronger, because of it. And the sweet memory of our brother shall remain to us —

“ Like some clear, large star, which pilgrims  
At their back leave, and see not always;  
Yet whensoever they list, may turn,  
And with its glories gild their faces still.”

For himself, he has ascended to the mountains of myrrh and the hills of frankincense, and has seen the day break and the shadows flee away. But, brothers, let us cherish no such idle notion as though James Powell had now forgotten, or has ceased to be interested, in the Chinaman, the Indian, and the Negro in America.



# XI

## **The Last Word for his Work**

REV. T. B. MCLEOD, D.D.



## XI

### The Last Word for His Work

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[On the last Sabbath but one in the year 1887, Dr. Powell preached in the Clinton Avenue Congregational Church, Brooklyn, N.Y. From this pulpit he went to his death-bed. Upon hearing of his death, the pastor wrote the following for the columns of the *Congregationalist*.]

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POWELL dead ! Taking up my evening paper, these words, in large letters, are the first to catch my eye. What, Powell ? A hasty glance at the particulars, and the paper drops from my hands. It is the man who, only forty hours before, sat by my side in the pulpit, sang with me out of the same book, and then rose to say his last public word on earth in behalf of the cause to which his life was devoted.

*Dead!* That robust, rugged, knotty, energetic, animated physique? Silent! That voice so clear, strong, ringing, penetrative, persuasive, pathetic? Why, I have just shaken hands with him! The tones of his voice are still sounding in my ears. It is even so: he is dead. Even so, Father, for so it seemeth right in Thy sight!

Last Sabbath was the day appointed for our annual contribution in behalf of the American Missionary Association. When, two months ago, I made an arrangement with him to present the cause to our congregation, the thought of *Christmas* did not occur to me. A happy oversight of foresight; for in accordance with a custom long existing, the services on Christmas Sabbath are made as far as possible to conform to the thought uppermost in every heart. I am very glad now that I had not consulted the calendar. Otherwise we would not have heard this, his last and, I venture to say, his most eloquent sermon. It was, moreover, quite in

keeping with the prevailing sentiment of the day; for Dr. Powell, in the exercise of that peculiar aptness so characteristic of him, gave such happy turn to his theme, that if any little disappointment existed, it was instantly banished; and we were made to feel that they keep Christmas best who are in accord with the spirit of Him who disrobed himself of his glory, and became appareled in human flesh, that he might preach the gospel to the poor, bring liberty to the captives, and light to them that sat in darkness. He showed us wherein consisted the Church's right to be, her charter, and that however eloquent the preacher, and delicious the music, and elegant the furniture, and sedate the worshipers, that church alone has a right to be, a right to kneel around the manger where the young Child lay, which has heart to execute the great commission of her Lord: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."



Launching into his subject, Mr. Powell presented the claims of the three classes, — three races in our midst which his society is seeking to evangelize, and to which Christmas means but little or nothing, — the Indians, the Chinese, and the negroes. Those who heard him will not soon forget his terrible arraignment of American Christians because of their systematic neglect of the two hundred and forty thousand Indians, the greater part of whom, notwithstanding our pride and boasting, are left to live in a state of untutored savagery. We blushed with shame as he showed us to ourselves, keeping Forefathers' Day, eating New England dinners, celebrating centenaries and anniversaries, extolling the virtues, the faith, the principles, the self-sacrificing devotion of Pilgrim and Puritan; boasting of our progress in intelligence, in wealth, in Christian civilization; and at the same time allowing these wards of the nation to live and die in ignorance and vice without a pang of conscience.

He pictured to us the condition of the Chinaman and his maltreatment, which has dishonored and discredited the good name of our nation. We invited him to our shores, and promised him protection under a special treaty. But he was unfortunate enough to be industrious and frugal, sober and peaceable, intelligent and prosperous, and withal Christianizable. He was altogether too much so in these respects for the sand-lots orator and the riffraff of the Pacific coast. He must stop coming. And in order to please some dirty politicians, this Christian country broke faith with a heathen nation, which, in the mean time, it was trying to convert to Christianity. He pointed out the duty of the Church to those Chinese we have allowed to remain, — a duty which will be discharged only when she has given them the gospel of Jesus Christ. He assured us this is no vain and fruitless task, by citing the example of the Chinese mission church in Oakland, whose benevolence

last year averaged thirteen dollars per member, — an example which their more enlightened brethren would do well to follow.


He drew some vivid pictures of the condition of our colored fellow-citizens: of their poverty, their ignorance, their thirst for knowledge, their power for good or for evil in the political fortunes of the nation. Unless we lift them up, they will drag us down. He placed the responsibility just where it belongs, — at the door of the Christian Church. We Christians can and must solve the problem which perplexes the statesman and the politician.

Mr. Powell's last sermon was a powerful plea in behalf of larger enterprise and more liberal gifts on the part of the Church. It was not an appeal to the emotions simply. It was a manly address to the intelligence and the conscience. He massed his facts and arguments in irresistible phalanx, and presented them in such a way as to carry the conviction

and sympathy of his hearers. The Church has lost a secretary who knew not only how to get money out of people's pockets, but how to put intelligence into people's heads. This is an art which he undoubtedly felt it important to cultivate.

His manner of preaching was charming. I can not realize that the clear, rich, sweet, penetrating voice, which I heard only the day before yesterday, is silent in death. He possessed in high degree most of the best qualities of the preacher. He was positive, but not dogmatic; earnest, but not denunciatory; tender, but not sentimental; scholarly, but not pedantic; simple, but not commonplace; impassioned, but yet graceful; popular, but not vulgar. Believing with all his heart in the reality and deadly power of sin, in the peril of the ungodly, and in the gospel as the only adequate remedy for a ruined race, he tried to make his fellow-Christians believe the same, and by his tremendous earnestness, by the contagion of his own

faith, he succeeded. No one could listen to him for five minutes without feeling the magnetism of his personality. And his enthusiasm never abated, because he never lost faith in the ultimate success of his cause. His closing words we shall never forget. They were the confession of his hope, and, in the light of what has happened since, it seems that while he uttered them a stronger attraction than that of earth was on him. Borrowing the imagery of the prophet of Patmos, he described the celestial city, the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, with its twelve gates opening in all directions, east, north, south, west. These gates are open continually, and on their way thither are multitudes from Asia and Africa and Europe and America, and the isles of the ocean. Had he a premonition, as, looking wistfully thitherward, the tears trickling down his face, he spoke to us of the gathering of the peoples, that he himself was about to enter through the gates into the city?



May the God of comfort overshadow his bereaved family ; may his associates continue to feel the power of his energetic faith, and the whole church continue to hear the voice of him who, though dead, yet speaketh !

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## XII

### Mail and Farewell

REV. A. F. BEARD, D.D.

*Corresponding Secretary American Missionary Association.*





## XII

### Hail and Farewell

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POWELL was my guest when my heart first stepped out towards him ; after that, we were friends. Many a time we met, and our friendship ripened for fifteen years. He was a prince of good fellowship and full of good humor. He had a retentive memory for quaint stories, and would laugh you a laugh over them that bred a contagion of laughter. No one with him ever had a dull hour. His smile was bright as the sunshine. He had "the merry heart" that "doeth good like medicine." If he were riding with you, he could ride as fast as the horse wanted to go. If he had his rifle in the

woods, he could tramp through bogs and marshes with the spirit of a gamesome fellow. If he were boating, he would rather shake out a reef from the sail than take one in. One of the most companionable of men, he carried his heart on his sleeve. He was not capable of a mean act. He was no self-seeker. He did not work for applause, nor was he afraid of blame. He had strong convictions, and he stood firm in his sincerity. He was no temporizer, but at the same time he was generous, and his sympathies and his feelings were above selfish suspicions. Fond of music and endowed with a rich voice, it was blessedness to be with him ; and when he would let his soul sing, he was one of those "sons of God" that "shout for joy."


He visited me in France. His experiences there met and proved his Celtic nature. He knew just enough of the language of the country to make his interpretations and his misinterpretations

and his occasional bold endeavors to phrase his thoughts in a foreign tongue exceedingly amusing.

With all this buoyant temper and electric disposition never did he cease to be the earnest Christian. He could get eloquent in the street in two minutes, or on the top of a tram car over any question of truth. It mattered not where he was or with whom, his heart flashed like tinder when one kindled it with the friction of a doubt or a difficulty. It was a blessing to know him.

Later on, very largely moved by his urgent and repeated solicitations, I became officially associated with him, leaving the mission work which had engaged my deepest sympathies to unite with him in one not less urgent, and quite as important in its relations to the kingdom of God. His glorious spirit, his generous sympathy, his abounding kindness which were in and upon his missionary zeal, attracted me. I found him all that I had

thought, and more. How sensitive his soul was to injustice! He literally felt the wrongs which came to the weak and to the oppressed; he made them his own; he carried their sorrows; their stripes were upon him. He denied himself very much, that he might be more truly identified himself with the needy who needed him. Sometimes with a look of sorrow on his face, he would bring me a letter received from some one who knew not what he did, in response to his appeals for missionary funds, which suggested that he might use a part of his own salary to replenish the scanty treasury. This, when I knew that he was struggling with severe economy to get squarely through the year, and was giving away to others far beyond his ability. Even when grieved or wounded he was slow to complain or to criticise. The smile would quickly come. He could be indignant and patient. Nevertheless he felt keenly. He had the sensibility of a spirit. On the Saturday




before the Sunday when he presented for the last time the cause so real and so dear to him, he mentioned to me the pain at the base of the brain, and his inability to sleep. I begged him to allow some one to meet his engagement in his stead. He trusted that he "would be better to-morrow," and left the office with the notes of "Jesus, Lover of my Soul" upon the air as he went out from us, to come again never. And thus he left us.

That was Saturday. On the next Wednesday we were gathered about his lifeless form, in the home which he had made for himself and his loved ones in Brooklyn. Drs. Meredith, Bradford, Behrends, and Strieby gave voice to our sorrow and to our hopes. Our hearts were heavy, but the holy Comforter was with us. On Thursday we followed the body in which his soul had lived to Nashua, where he had spent his earlier student years. In the Pilgrim Church there we remembered his faith and service and his love for

others, while we thought anew of ours for him. It was a sad day, but through the gloom the note of triumph sounded, and the services were one constant repetition in various forms of the hymn, "Servant of God, well done!" Then we said our last adieu. Farewell, dear brother!

He whose companionship, friendship, and fellowship we had so greatly prized and lovingly cherished, was not old in years, but he had lived a long life. He had consecrated himself to follow closely in the steps of Christ. The real glory of this consecration can not be chronicled in these pages, but the shining name in God's Book of Life in the day of God's remembrance will stand out like a radiant star in the heavens. It was a life of grand sacrifice, of patient and undeviating love for the oppressed, whose necessities had become his own until he gave them the life which Christ had saved. Subordinating himself to this consecration, he has left his example, which may well be inspiration and



strength to all who a little longer stay, working and praying for those who have been under the feet of the strong.

He had given himself to help lead a people away from the degradations of ignorance and sin into the paths of knowledge and virtue, to help those who had the inheritances of paganism and slavery to rise into new habits of thought and feeling. He had pleaded with churches and with Christian people for their consecration and sacrifices; pleaded that they with him should take upon themselves, and unto themselves, the sins and sorrows, struggles and hopes of those who must look to Christians whom Christ has saved for the salvation that is in Christ. The worker who had thus consecrated himself to this had died in his unfinished work. Meanwhile centuries past and unreached turn to us who continue unto this day and pray that the glorious example of Powell's life — great in faith and works — may be strength and inspiration to those who re-



main for the redemption which must be wrought out by a consecration which shall be "faithful unto death." God be with us till we meet again, my brother !

# XIII

Poem to the Memory of  
Dr. Powell

A PASTOR IN THE SOUTH

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".

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## XIII

### To the Memory of Dr. Powell

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ONE night, entranced, I sat spellbound,  
And listened in my place,  
And made a solemn vow to be  
A hero for my race.

He plead as but a few can plead,  
With eloquence and might,  
He plead for a humanity,  
The Freedmen and the right.

His soul and true nobility  
Went out in every word,  
And strongly moved for better things  
Was every one that heard.

Too soon has death made good his claim  
On him who moved us so;  
Too great and white the harvest yet,  
To spare him here below.

Oh ! " why this waste ? " — forgive me, Lord,  
I would not Judas be;  
Yet who will plead as he has plead,  
For Freedmen and for me?

Perhaps, ah, yes ! I know he will —  
This sleeping prince of Thine,  
In many a multitude be heard,  
Yet plead for right and mine.

## XIV

**Dr. Powell's Joyousness**

REV. WILLIAM M. TAYLOR, D.D.

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## XIV

### Dr. Powell's Joyousness

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I WAS most impressed by two things in Brother Powell—his radiant joyousness and his delightful humor, and the ease with which he could make the transition from the telling of a funny story to the uttering of a devout prayer, thus leading others with him up to the very steps of the throne of grace.

A while ago, in Scotland, there was an old Covenanter, William Guthrie by name, who had a disposition very much like Brother Powell's, full of joyousness and fun—let us call things by their right names. On one occasion a large number of brethren gathered together in his



manse, among whom was James Durham, better known as the author of a book on Revelation, who was a popular minister in Glasgow at the time. He was a very serious man, like the dog that John Brown tells about, with a life so full of seriousness that there was n't anything of the joyous in his disposition. On that day Guthrie was bubbling over with fun, and while they were worshipping he was called upon by a brother to pray, and he went just straight up to the Hearer of prayer, and they were all moved to tears by his devotion. After they arose from their knees Durham said, "William, I can't understand. If I had been as merry as you were a little while ago, I could not have prayed for four and twenty hours." Guthrie replied, "If I had n't laughed so much I could n't pray."

My model is Paul. Hear what he says: "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say, rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at

hand. Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." You see how near the joy follows the serious.

The Lord knew that the Christian lives in the ray of sunshine of Jesus, and we do dishonor to our Master, because we do not let our joyousness speak for him. And I bless God that wherever James Powell went, he went with joy, the man he was. He did not keep it within. The joy of his Lord was with him even on the day when men shall depart because he is with them.



## XV

### **The Silenced Voice**



## XV

### The Silenced Voice

This is a book of loving memorials, but we can not close its pages without permitting the silenced voice to speak again upon the theme which so often gave it inspiration. We have spoken of him—he shall now speak to us.

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#### I. MISSIONARY ZEAL.

*[The following selections are from Dr. Powell's paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Missionary Association at Salem, Mass., October, 1884.]*

“WHY do you not start that engine?”  
“Because,” replied the engineer,  
“the water has not yet come to the boil.”  
In this respect man is a good deal like an engine. There is not much go in him until steam is up. He must feel deeply or he will act feebly.

There are some subjects about which Christians ought to feel intensely. Missions is one of them ; but the fact is that to the average Christian about the driest subject you can mention is missions. Why? Feeling in view of duty to a lost world has not been brought to the boiling point.

The generic source of all missionary zeal is gospel truth. This is the underlying and sustaining power of every missionary enterprise. The command, obligatory on every Christian, "Go preach the gospel to every creature," and the reason for the command, a lost world that the gospel alone can reclaim, are two facts out of which you are at liberty only to read this great fundamental truth, that Christian Missions are the divinely-appointed agencies for the world's redemption. There is enough in this truth to stir the largest intelligence in its every fiber. It implies the appeal of the lost for salvation. It contains the stupendous




motive that brought the Son of God from heaven to earth. It was the inspiration of his sacrificing life, it was the justification of his atoning death.

By the very condition on which a Christian is entitled to hope ; viz., obedience, it is rendered simply impossible for him to be excusably indifferent to the subject of missions. He has no right to imagine or call himself a Christian if his heart beat not in sympathy with the heart of his divine Lord and Master. A missionary church will, therefore, be a spiritual church. In a broad sense you can not have the one without the other. The spirit of obedience is the life, missions the fruit.

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Consider the sacred obligation under which we specially rest to help the negroes. One point only I touch upon, and that is the invaluable services which the negro rendered as a soldier to help save the Union. Called upon to enter our army



and fight battles when he knew that even as a prisoner no quarter would be given him, he responded with alacrity, and fought with a bravery that astonished his enemies and far surpassed the expectation of his friends. The record shows that 178,896 colored men enlisted and served during the war. In many of the battles they were assigned the posts of honor, and valorously maintained their place in the thickest of the fight. They readily caught the spirit of devotion to the flag which animated their white brethren, and often inspiration was awakened within their hearts as they heard recounted what the flag symbolized and what it meant. We laugh as we listen to the speech of the negro soldier to his comrades: "Our massas, dey hab lived under de flag. Dey got rich under it, and everything beautiful for de chillum; under it dey hab grind us up and put us in their pocket for money, but de fust minute dey tink that de old flag mean freedom for us cullud folks, they



pull it right down and run up a rag of dere own. But we 'll neber desert de ole flag, boys ! We hab lib under it for 1862 years, and we 'll die for it now !” And many of them did die for it. When the war ended there were eighty thousand graves in which slept colored soldiers who had cheerfully given their lives, not only that their race might be free, but, as they often expressed it in their prayer, “that success might come to Massa Linkum’s soldiers.”

I want to call your attention to a single example of heroism on the part of a colored soldier that, for an intelligent appreciation of what the sacrifice of life in a righteous cause meant, it would be difficult to parallel : —

The First Louisiana Regiment of colored soldiers, recruited in New Orleans, was about to take its departure for the front. The colonel, who for some reason could not accompany his men, presented the regimental flags to the color-sergeant. After a brief speech, full of patriotic


feeling, he concluded with these words : "Color-guard, protect, defend, die for, but do not surrender these flags." The sergeant, upon receiving them, made this simple but noble response : "Colonel, I will bring back these colors to you in honor, or report to God the reason why." And when a few days afterward, during an assault upon Port Hudson, he fell defending the flag, and his dying blood crimsoned its folds, another took his place, and saved it from falling into the hands of the enemy. The brave standard-bearer kept his word, and in failing to return the colors to the hands that committed them to his care, he "reported to God the reason why." Was ever conception of duty to principle clearer and more heroically carried out than in this case?

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Well, what can be done? The answer is ready. If anything is to be done, the friends of this work must exert themselves to interest others. It is not enough that

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we have an interest for use only when we are called to make a contribution. We should each be like the heated particle of water that passes on the heat to the particles touching it. When God awakens an interest in a human soul as regards anything belonging to His kingdom, it is that it may be used to awaken interest in other souls. Let us put into practice Biblical methods for the awakening and maintaining and spreading interest, and the thing will be done. Let us think of these things. "While I was musing the fire burned." Let us talk about this work. "Did not our hearts burn within us as He talked to us by the way?" Let us hold missionary conferences regarding it: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another." Let us hold missionary prayer meetings to pray for it. "For when they were all with one accord in one place," we read that the mighty inspirations of Pentecost were experienced.

We need—the churches need—this enduement of Pentecostal power; for it is a great work to which God has called us, and nothing great ever was or ever will be achieved without enthusiasm: the elevation and salvation of twelve millions of people who are almost destitute of everything, and who need almost everything to be done for them; heating up to the boiling point and holding there the feelings of nearly four hundred thousand church members, who are to furnish the men and the women and the means to carry forward that work. We need to feel as did David when he sang, “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” As did Paul when he cried out, “Necessity is laid upon me; woe is me if I preach not the gospel.” As did Luther when, in the presence of Charles, who demanded his recantation, he exclaimed, “Here I stand; I can not otherwise: God help me.” As did Moody when he said, “I go to England for ten thousand souls.”



The enginery of the American Missionary Association, with all its massive machinery, is at work. It requires a great deal of steam to keep it working. We must watch the fires. The draughts leading to them must be kept clean, and the furnaces kept well fueled all the time; for if the fires burn low or go out, the boiling ceases; and if the boiling cease, the work stops.

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## II. A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

*[The following was Dr. Powell's last editorial in the AMERICAN MISSIONARY. It extended to the readers of that magazine a greeting for the New Year—a year which he never saw on earth.]*

A MERRY Christmas and a happy New Year! It is an inspiring delight to hear and speak the greeting. It is a phrase that comes down to us from the ages. All the more gladly do we repeat it on that account. There are some things, thank God, even in this world, that never grow old. The greetings of

Christmas and New Year are among them. This is because they are connected with Christ and his kingdom. True happiness for mankind first came into this world when Christ was born. In proportion as he is received into human life, happiness is experienced. Therefore, in wishing for our readers a happy New Year, we are wishing for them more of Christ in their thought and life.

But Christ never comes into a life to be held there in confinement. He seeks our life that it may become a channel through which he may flow to bless and make happy other lives. He is not only our peace—he is our righteousness as well. How miserable we would be in our sins and shortcomings were this not so! But all the more on that account will we desire to *do* what we can to make up for our deficiencies. Loving him, we shall want to do his will. He wills that all shall hear of the salvation his gospel brings. We can proclaim the message. He wills that



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all shall see the power of his gospel in the benevolent fruits of his followers' lives. We can exhibit that power. Where we can not go to tell the story and exhibit the power in person, we can send. Therefore, in wishing for our readers a happy New Year, we are wishing for them a righteousness that will manifest Christ actually saving the world in what they say and do. Happiness through service and sacrifice—this is the happiness *The American Missionary* wishes for all its readers, because it is the only happiness worth having.











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